

Grant W. Cleland

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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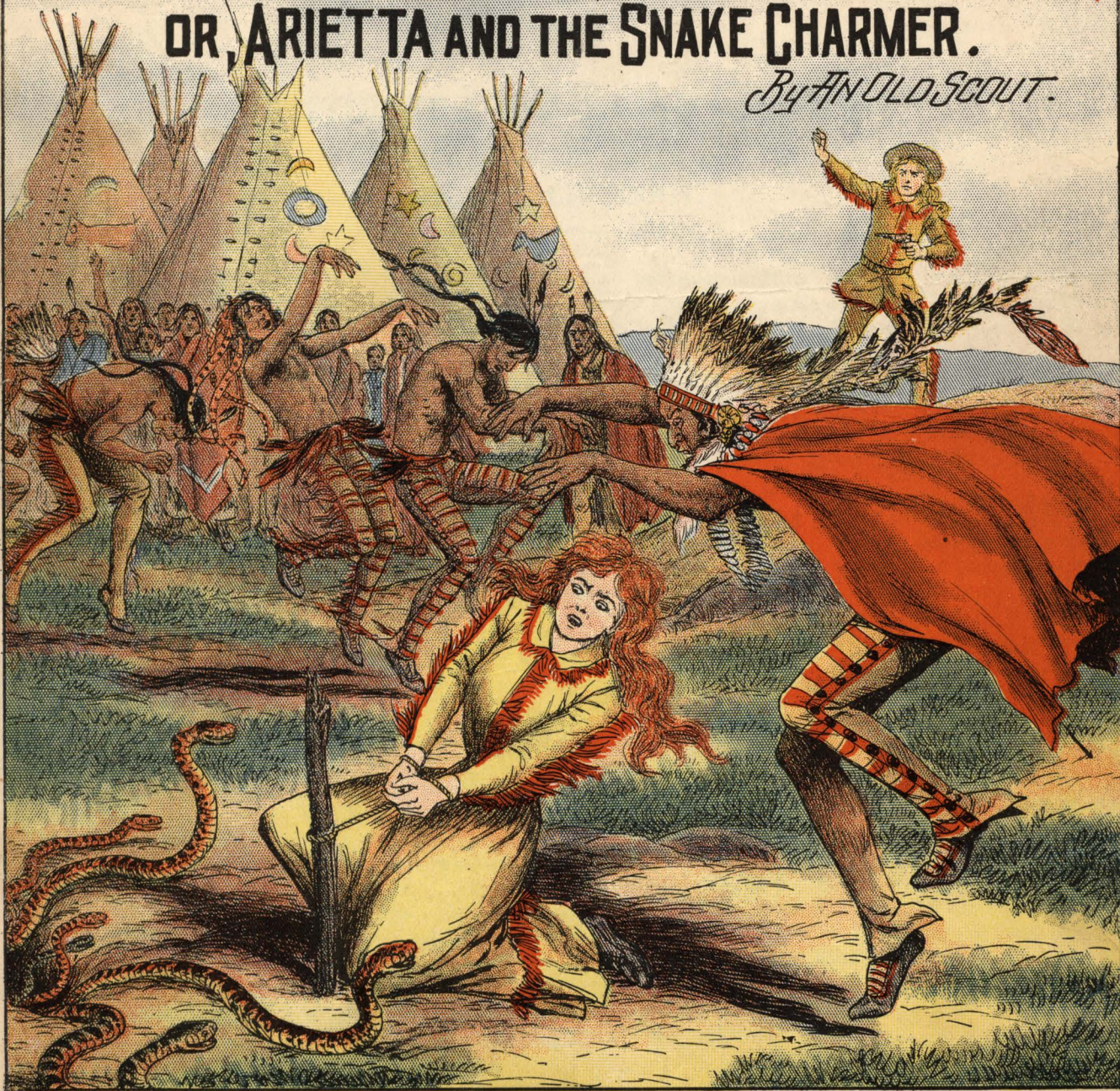
No. 299.

NEW YORK, JULY 10, 1908.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST ROUTING ^{AND} THE "GHOST DANCERS", OR, ARIETTA AND THE SNAKE CHARMER.

By AN OLD SCOUT.



Young Wild West uttered an involuntary cry of horror as he saw Arietta tied to a stake, the snake charmer dancing near her and calling a score of slimy reptiles to her. The deafening din made by the Ghost Dancers added to the horror of the scene.

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YOUNG WILD WEST ROUTING THE "GHOST DANCERS"

—OR—

Arietta and the Snake Charmer

By AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAMP OF THE "GHOST DANCERS."

The sun was sinking in the West, gilding the jagged peaks of the mountain range that ran parallel with the boundary line between New Mexico and Arizona, and brightening up what would be called a desolate scene.

To the left the sluggish stream known as the Black River flowed on its winding course, through ravines and deep cuts and across comparatively level spots, where the grass was green and the cottonwoods and willows lined its banks, with the heavier timber back upon the slopes.

The western sky was tinged with purple and gold, blending into a brightness that contrasted superbly with the clear blue that was above.

Only a floating white cloud could be seen here and there, and the only living thing of the animal nature to be seen was a vulture that soared high above a patch of sand that was partly covered by a growth of sickly looking cactus.

Close to the foot of a steep, rocky slope ran a trail that had the prints of hoofs, as well as wagon wheels, upon its surface.

This wound its way along to the bank of the stream, following the course with the utmost precision, regardless of the fact that the distance across the little desert might have been shortened by drawing a straight line.

But running water and rich, green grass is far more attractive to the traveler, be he white man or Indian, than alkali sand and thorny cactus.

Just as the sun had begun to disappear behind a high ridge in the distance the barking of dogs might have been heard from the wide ravine through which ran the trail before it came to the river.

As the seconds flitted by the sounds became plainer, and then it became evident that both human beings and horses were approaching in company with the yelping dogs.

Gradually the sounds became plainer, and the plainer they became the more discordant they were.

Then out from the mouth of the ravine appeared a large band of Apache Indians, with the villainous, old chief Big Cloud in the lead.

It was late in the fall of the year, and, in spite of the fact that the Apaches had been fairly well treated by the officers at the Indian agency, nearly five hundred of them had revolted and left the reservation to live in the primitive fashion of their forefathers and make war on the hated palefaces, the traditional enemies of the red-men.

The revolt was largely due to the efforts of a scheming Apache called Yellow Dog, who had received a pretty fair education at the school on the reservation and who had lately become known as a great medicine man.

This fellow possessed all the cunning of his race, and, in addition to this, he had learned how to practice deceit to such an extent that he was known and feared by all his people.

To begin with, he could handle the worst of the poisonous snakes to be found without being harmed by them, and he could call them from their haunts at short notice by a weird sort of a chant, which he would sing and cause the Indian boys and little squaws to run to their tepees for protection.

The bucks and braves would stop their conversation when the chant began, for they knew that the "great medicine man" of the tribe was getting ready to hold a conference with the Great Spirit, and on such occasions he was not to be interfered with.

The cunning redskin had also instituted what was called the "ghost dance."

This craze extended to the Sioux tribe in the north a few years later, and it was through it that the Sioux and the Brules were incited to make an outbreak, resulting in a very few months in the death of Sitting Bull, and beyond a doubt putting an end to the great Indian wars.

As we have stated, there were nearly five hundred in the band that had left the reservation, and about one-third of them were braves and bucks ready and able to fight.

They had accumulated a good supply of guns and ammunition, and when they left they brought plenty of corn and other provender.

A lonely spot in the hills was their destination, and there it was planned to hold a "ghost dance" that would be the means of changing the vast territory claimed by the Apaches as their rightful lands back into the state it had been before the venturesome white man came to rule them, and drive them to the limits of a reservation.

Chief Big Cloud firmly believed this would come to pass, for by his arts and powers of deception Yellow Dog had won him to his side.

Then it was easy to get a following from the vast number of Indians of the reservation, for the majority of them believed in the chief, who had fought so valiantly under Geronimo.

It was evident that the Indians were heading for the river, so they might pitch their camp for the night, for when they came in sight of the sun-kissed stream shouts and cries went up, showing how pleased they were.

The cavalcade, barbarous and primitive in appearance, wound its way along, and when the bank of the river was reached a halt was called.

Then the work of putting the camp in shape began.

Tepees and lodges sprung up on every hand, and while the mongrel dogs Indians seem to be so fond of were barking and running about those of the children large enough to walk and run rushed to the sloping bank of the river and began playing in the water.

In the centre of the site selected for the camp the lodge of the chief was erected, and near it the hideous-painted tepee of the snake charmer, or medicine man, found its way.

Yellow Dog was very quiet just then, and had been since the night before, when he initiated some of the braves into the ghost dance.

By having nothing to say, and keeping aloof from the redskins for rather long intervals, he simply made himself more fearsome to them.

These were the times when he was supposed to be communing with the Great Spirit, but really he was simply studying to gain more power over his followers, for the most part.

The clever villain had a cask of whisky among his supplies, but as he had made it appear that he thrust a live rattlesnake into the bunghole before starting from the reservation, there was no danger of any one stealing any of the stuff.

A box that was covered by a wire net was his principal stock in trade, if such it might be called, and in this were

a number of poisonous snakes, their fangs being extracted, though unknown to any one but the snake charmer himself.

Fires were kindled, and while some of the squaws worked away for their immediate families others prepared to cook the best of the food they had for Yellow Dog and the chief.

Neither of the latter named happened to have anything in the line of a family, Big Cloud having lost his wife and two papooses in a flood the spring before, and the medicine man claimed that he had never married and would not be permitted to by the Great Spirit until the reformation should begin.

This would take place as soon as the ghost dancers reached the spot they were heading for, and after the dance had been finished.

There were several maidens among the revolting redskins, comely, as Apache maidens go, but there was not one of them who did not fear that she might be selected to grace the tepee of Yellow Dog as his squaw.

They all feared him too much for that; but if it was so willed the victim would make no complaint, but accept the fate allotted to her, and live and work for the great medicine man and his snakes.

While the preparations to get the camp in order were in progress two enemies of the Apaches were crouching in a little grove of cottonwoods, less than a hundred yards from the outskirts of the camp.

They were spying upon the redskins—there was no question about that.

One was a boy, handsome of face and with the figure of an Apollo, and the other was a tall man of rather dark complexion, straight as an arrow and with an eye that gleamed with anything but love for the Indians.

When we state that the two were no other than Young Wild West, the boy-hero of the West and Champion Dead-shot, and Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout and Indian fighter, it will be readily understood that they were there for the purpose of getting a line on the redskins as to number and what they were up to.

But the fact was that Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie had heard about the big band of "ghost dancers" that had left the reservation, and they had accepted the invitation of the authorities at Fort Defiance to assist the cavalymen in routing them.

To those of our readers who may not have become thoroughly acquainted with our dashing young hero, we will state that, though he was a boy in years, he was a man in every other sense of the word, and that by his coolness and daring and determination to always do right, no matter what the cost, he had made a name for himself such as no other young hero of the Wild West ever dared to aspire for.

He was a champion in everything he undertook, which is saying a great deal, though he never aspired to do things that he knew he was not capable of.

Having been born and reared in the Wild West and being fond of excitement and adventure from his earliest childhood, he had kept at it until he was about as near perfect in the arts of woodcraft, shooting and riding as it was possible for a human being to get.

But his extreme coolness and quick wits made him what

he was, and hence he was able to accomplish many things that no one else would try.

Loved, feared and hated, he went about from place to place, always looking for something stirring, and ever ready to help those who needed it.

Cheyenne Charlie had cast his lot with the dashing young deadshot two or three years before the opening of our story, and when he was a boy scarcely seventeen years of age.

Wild, as he was called by his intimate acquaintances, could ride and shoot at that time as well as he could now, and his judgment had always been marvelous, for a mere boy.

Owning and being interested in several good-paying gold and silver mines, he had the time and money to permit him pursue his hobby of hunting for adventure, and thus he had become famous.

Cheyenne Charlie was one of his partners and Jim Dart, a true boy of the West, who was about his own age, was the other.

As we find our hero and the scout spying upon the Apache camp Jim Dart is in charge of their camp, a mile further up the river, where he is waiting, with the "girls" of the party and the two Chinamen in their employ.

The girls referred to were Arietta Murdock, Young Wild West's golden-haired sweetheart; Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, and Eloise Gardner, the sweetheart of Jim Dart.

Of the three, Arietta was the only one who had been born and reared in the Wild West, but they all knew how to use firearms, ride horses and defend themselves in times of danger.

Arietta, however, though but a mere child, as far as age was concerned, was an exception in the way of coolness, bravery and skill with the rifle and revolver.

Much of this she had learned from her dashing young lover, but the primary cause was that it must have been born in her.

But more of the girls later on.

Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie had sighted the Indians as they came out of the wide ravine, and they had promptly left their camp to ascertain how many of them there were, and how well they were equipped.

They were now taking in the scene with no little interest.

While they were peering through the branches and studying the busy scene before them a yell went up from one of the sentries of the redskin band, and, turning their gaze in the direction it came from, they were surprised to see a dilapidated wagon, with a canvas top and drawn by a team of mules, emerge from the ravine.

CHAPTER II.

THE YANKEE PEDDLER AND HIS DARKY.

The Apache who had first discovered the wagon coming along the trail was about as much surprised as were Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie, for an elderly white man was driving the mules.

The fact that the members of the band had started on the warpath against the palefaces was quite enough to make the brave sound the alarm in a hurry.

But the driver of the dilapidated, old vehicle did not seem to be much concerned over it.

However, he looked sharply at the big camp ahead of him and then brought his team to a halt, as though he was undecided whether to proceed or not.

It would have been quite enough to make the average traveler turn and go back as fast as his team could be made to go, the sight of so many hostile Indians.

In less than ten seconds from the time they heard the yell of the sentinel fully fifty braves were running toward the wagon.

Then the old man seemed to grow a trifle uneasy.

"Them Injuns seems ter be mad about somethin'," he observed, as he turned his face toward the rear of the covered wagon. "Wake up, Julius Napoleon! Injuns is after us!"

"Wha' dat, boss?" came the reply, as a woolly head raised up from the rear. "Injuns, yo' done say, boss? Why, de Injuns won't hurt us! Dey is all good Injuns nowadays."

"I'll be gumswizzled if these here act as though they're very good, Julius Napoleon. Jest cast a look at 'em. If I ain't mistaken they've got yaller an' blue paint on their faces an' arms, which means that they're on ther rampage."

The darky crept to the front of the wagon and was just in time to see the foremost of the Apaches less than twenty yards away, and advancing with their guns raised in a threatening manner.

"Fo' de Lor!" he gasped. "Dey done mean to kill us, sure, Boss Greenwood! Dey must be Injuns dat's on de warpath, like what we read about. Git out de guns, fo' we mus' fight!"

"Don't do nothin' of ther kind," was the reply. "We couldn't lick that crowd, no matter how hard we tried. I'll jest talk to 'em, an' see if I can't reason with 'em. It may be that I'll be able ter sell 'em some of my Yankee notions afore I git through with 'em. I always was a persistent sort of feller ter home, an' when I made up my mind ter do a thing I ginerally come mighty nigh ter doin' it. Here, I've been sellin' goods at a profit of two hundred per cent. ever since I've been out in this wilderness, an' I calculate that I ain't goin' ter stop business on account of any Injuns. I'm——"

Just what he was going to continue with would be hard to tell, but he was interrupted by one of the redskins, who discharged a rifle and sent the bullet through the top of the wagon, right above his head.

"Hey, there!" he cried, waving them back. "Don't shoot! We ain't done nothin' ter deserve it. I'm Darius Greenwood, a peace-lovin' peddler of Yankee notions. Be a little bit reasonable, won't yer? I want ter talk business with yer."

By this time a score or more Apaches had gathered about the odd-looking outfit.

For reasons of his own, Julius Napoleon had dropped down in the rear of the wagon again, and he was holding fast of his crop of black wool, as though he expected every moment to have it lifted.

One of the redskins jumped up on the seat, and, with a shove, sent the old man sprawling on the ground.

He was seized and tossed around roughly then, for all hands seemed to be anxious to get hold of him, and finally, when he was allowed to stand on his feet, he saw the Indian driving the mules straight for the camp.

"Well, I'll be gumswizzled!" he exclaimed. "Did yer ever see sich impoliteness in all your life? They've gone off with my mules, wagon, stock in trade, nigger an' all! Hey, you redskin fellers! If yer don't stop your foolin' I'll report this to ther soldiers when I git to ther fort!"

Many of the Apaches could understand every word he said, and they laughed heartily, showing that they enjoyed the apparent innocence of the old man.

One of them took a rusty revolver from his coat pocket, and then, catching hold of his arm, started him on a trot after the wagon.

Tall and spare, Darius Greenwood was built for running, and as he was put to it he suddenly broke away from the redskin and made a spurt that astonished them all.

But as he was keeping right after the wagon they did not try to catch him again, but let him go, while they followed, jeering and yelling at him.

In this way the peddler of Yankee notions reached the camp of the Ghost Dancers.

Big Cloud stood with folded arms in front of his lodge, his chest thrown out and a look of importance on his scarred and painted visage.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, as Darius Greenwood halted before him. "Where paleface come from?"

"I come from Connecticut, ther land of ther wooden nutmegs," was the quick reply. "Are you the high cockalorum of this crowd?"

Me Big Cloud, chief of Apache Ghost Dancers," was the reply, while the redskin puffed his chest out an inch or two further.

"Well, if that's ther case, I've got a complaint ter make to yer. These here Injuns of yours is altogether too rough in their play. Why, one of 'em chucked me out of my own wagon, an' if I hadn't landed on my hands an' knees I might have struck on my head an' broke my neck. I want yer ter punish 'em fur it, do yer hear?"

The chief laughed as heartily as it was possible for an Apache chief to do, for it was so very humorous that he could not help it.

But just then the braves, who had started in to find out what was in the wagon, pulled out Julius Napoleon, and the yell the frightened darky let out awoke the echoes and started the dogs of the camp to barking furiously.

The chief was evidently of the opinion that he had a fool pure and simple to deal with, and, raising his foot, he made a kick at the peddler, which would have undoubtedly knocked him off his feet had it struck him.

But the foot did not reach him, and instead it was caught by Darius Greenwood's right hand.

This move was followed by a quick jerk and Chief Big Cloud fell sprawling on the ground.

"If you're goin' ter try ter be funny I'll jest show yer what I kin do in that line!" exclaimed the peddler. "Folks ter home always allowed that I was putty good

with my hands an' feet, an' I ain't a bit too old ter let you varmints know about it!"

But the paleface prisoner's triumph was very short-lived, for the next moment he was seized by a couple of the braves and quickly bound hand and foot.

The darky had put up a fight when he was dragged out of the wagon, but he had no more chance than a fly in a spider web, and he, too, was bound and thrown upon the ground.

Then the chief came around and, after kicking the peddler twice and the darky once, turned his attention to the wagon.

At a command from him the mules were unhitched and led away, and then the contents of the wagon were hauled out.

When Darius Greenwood said that he was peddling Yankee notions he certainly told the truth, for there was a little of everything in the stock he carried, from pins and needles to ribbons and calico.

But there was hardly one article that was worth as much as a dollar, the most being of the very cheap sort.

Jewelry was principally his ware, and there was such an amount of it that the eyes of the redskins fairly bulged when they saw it tumbled in a heap on the ground.

The squaws forgot all about their work and made a rush for the pile.

For a wonder, the chief allowed them to scramble for the stuff, and as fast as he thought one had all that she was entitled to he would send her away with a kick.

The peddler raved and stormed as the work of destruction went on, while the darky looked on with eyes like saucers.

In less than fifteen minutes the whole stock of the peddler had been divided among those who were lucky enough to get anything out of the scramble.

There was hardly anything there that the male members of the band wanted, anyhow, though the medicine man came forward and claimed a pair of gum boots that the peddler had in the wagon for his own use.

"Well, are yer satisfied?" asked Greenwood, when the scramble and division was over. "If yer ain't, make 'em put ther stuff back in ther wagon an' then start over ag'in."

"Paleface heap much fool!" declared Big Cloud, who understood him perfectly. "He no right here," and he tapped his forehead.

"Maybe you think so, but I don't," was the retort. "You've gone an' cleaned me out, an' have made a poor man of me, fur I ain't got more'n ten dollars to my name now. I was 'dependin' on makin' a couple of hundred dollars clear from ther sale of that lot of stuff. But look at it now! Every squaw in ther camp is foolin' with my jewelry an' notions. You may have an idee that this is a picnic, but some one will have ter pay fur it, yer kin bet your boots!"

"Paleface man will no want pay, for he will die to-morrow night at the ghost dance," said Big Cloud. "He will be the first sacrifice to the Great Spirit."

"Big Cloud speaks with much wisdom," spoke up the medicine man, as he came forward in time to catch what was said. "Yellow Dog put the words in his mouth. The paleface and the black man shall be put among my rat-

tlesnakes, and when they have been bitten until they can no longer see they shall be burned at the stake. The Great Spirit of the Ghost Dancers says so, and he must be obeyed!"

"Well, I'll be gumswizzled!" exclaimed Darius Greenwood, turning to the darky. "What do yer think of that, Julius Napoleon?"

CHAPTER III.

READY TO TRY FOR THE RESCUE.

Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie watched what took place when the Apaches met the traveler in the wagon with no little interest.

They soon realized that the old man was quite a character in his way, and they could not help smiling at the way he took his capture.

"That galoot is a regular scorcher," said the scout, in a whisper. "He's a blamed sight more smarter than he looks ter be. He'll fool ther redskins, I wouldn't wonder."

"He is certainly not half as innocent as he looks to be, Charlie," was our hero's reply.

As the peddler talked in a rather loud and shrill voice, they could hear everything said; but the guttural tones of the chief were not quite distinct enough for them.

Wild decided to get a little nearer to the camp, so he might find out just what the Apaches proposed to do with their two prisoners.

He worked his way down the hill and soon got close enough to hear all that was said.

It was just then that he heard the chief say that the two were to be put to death the following night—that they were to be offered as a sacrifice in honor of the "Ghost Dancers," in fact.

This relieved the boy somewhat, as he had feared that the Indians would take the notion to kill the prisoners right away.

In that case he would have been puzzled as to how to save them.

But now it was different, for he had twenty-four hours in which to think of a way to effect their rescue.

Having heard all he cared to just then, he made his way back to his waiting companion, and then the two started for their own camp.

They got there before darkness set in.

Jim Dart and the girls, who had been not a little anxious about them, and who had been watching the Indian encampment from the hill above the camp, were more than glad to see them come back safely.

"Well, Wild, what was all the commotion about?" Arietta asked, as her dashing young lover brushed back his long, chestnut hair and took a seat on a log near her. "Jim says he saw them running about, as if they were excited over something."

"Well, there was quite a little excitement over there, Et," was the reply. "The redskins captured an old man and a darky, who were following their trail with a mule wagon. The old man is a peddler of Yankee notions, so

he told them; but he won't be in business very soon again, for the squaws cleaned him out of his stock."

Then he related all that had taken place, not forgetting to tell them how Darius Greenwood had acted.

The girls smiled, in spite of the fact that the prisoners were in a bad situation.

But probably this was because they relied on the dashing young deadshot to find a way to get them out of the scrape they were in.

If it had not been that they were on their way across the wild country when they met a detachment of cavalry and learned that the band of Indians calling themselves the Ghost Dancers had left the reservation, the girls would not have been with our hero and his partners.

But, as it was, it was not the first time they had been in such a situation, and as long as they could keep out of sight of the Apaches they knew they would be safe.

Besides, they were to meet a division of cavalry the next day, by appointment, and then they would be comparatively safe.

Young Wild West did not mean to remain in camp so close to the redskins that night.

After it got good and dark it was his intention to move further along the river and stop until daylight.

Then they would go to the spot where they had agreed to meet the cavalry and wait for them.

Our friends had eaten their supper before the Indians appeared in sight, so there was nothing to hinder them from setting out whenever they pleased.

Wing Wah, the cook, and Hop Wah, who was his brother and the "handy man" of the party, were ready to load the pack horses at a short notice.

The two Chinamen were very innocent-looking fellows.

But they could hardly be called that after one came to know them, especially Hop.

He was really a wonder in his way, for he could perform sleight-of-hand tricks with the greatest of ease and mystify those who watched him.

Then he was a professional card sharp and liked gambling as well as he did eating and drinking.

Being of a humorous and good natured turn of mind, he made lots of fun for the party. But Hop could be serious at times, and more than once had he shown himself capable of doing things that others could not, the results being that a life was saved.

But one of the greatest of differences between the Celestial brothers was that Wing paid strict attention to his own business and let other people's alone, and Hop did not.

Both Hop and Wing had listened to the recital of what took place at the Apache camp, and Hop had become greatly interested.

He had experienced all sorts of things with redskins, and that was why he was so interested.

"Me likee go looker at um ledskin camp before we go away, so be, Misler Wild," he said. "Maybe me makee um Melican man and um niggee man allee samee gittee way flom um Ghostee Dancers."

"I reckon you could come pretty near doing it, Hop," replied Young Wild West. "But we don't want to let the redskins know that we are around, so, as long as the

prisoners are not to be injured until to-morrow night, we had better wait till we meet the cavalry."

"Allee light, Mislér Wild."

The Chinaman always abided by what the young dead-shot said.

But as it began to get very dark our hero began to think that if a rescue could be effected that night it would be all the better for the two prisoners.

He finally came to the conclusion that it might be a good idea to take Cheyenne Charlie and Hop with him to the camp, and see what could be brought about by strategy.

Turning to the scout, he observed:

"What do you think about letting Jim and the girls go on further up the river, while we take Hop and go and see what we can do for the peddler and his ducky, Charlie?"

"Jest what yer say, Wild;" was the reply, while Charlie showed by his actions that he would be only too glad to go.

"It will be a risky thing to do, since there are so many of them, Wild," spoke up Arietta. "But the red scoundrels may change their minds and put their prisoners to death to-night."

"They are likely ter change their minds," said the scout, shaking his head. "Yer never kin put a bit of faith in what any of 'em says."

"Well, we will try it, then," said our hero. "Hop, help your brother to get the pack horses ready, and then we will go. But I want you to be sure that you have got your fireworks and other contrivances with you when we go. There is a great medicine man there, and he can do wonderful things, for any galoot that carries a lot of rattlers around with him isn't to be sneezed at."

"Me no likee lattlesnakes, so be," the Chinaman declared, as he started to help his brother with the work they had been assigned to. "Livee latters allee samee no goodee. But me gottee nicee one madee outee lubber, so be, an' him velly nicee lattlesnake. Me showee to um medicine man, and me allee samee makee him sickee!"

As he followed up his gift of sleight-of-hand a great deal, the clever Chinaman had all sorts of articles to help him out in the deception he practiced.

The rubber rattlesnake was one of them, and it certainly was very lifelike in appearance.

Wild and his partners knew just what Hop was capable of, or they would not have been so willing to take him to the camp of the Ghost Dancers.

In fact, it was only on his account that our hero and the scout were going to make the attempt to rescue the two prisoners.

In a few minutes the camp was broken up and the pack horses loaded.

The two Chinamen were so used to doing it that they worked on a system.

"Now, then," said Wild, "Jim, just keep right along with the river, and be ready to move at a moment's notice. It may be that the redskins will pursue us, and if they do we will not head this way, but make for the sand hills to the right to throw them off. If you hear firing you will know it is time to look out for yourselves. You can easily hide from them in the dark, I reckon."

"All right," Dart answered. "I reckon we'll manage it all right, Wild."

Our hero now mounted his sorrel stallion Spitfire and Charlie and Hop got upon their horses.

The Chinaman's mount was a broncho, swift and full of endurance, though the match of our hero's splendid steed had never been found as yet.

The scout's bay was one of the best that money could buy, so they were pretty well fixed in case they had to flee for their lives from the Ghost Dancers.

The Indian camp being so close by, the three let their horses go at a walk.

When they got as close as they deemed advisable with the horses Wild dismounted.

Charlie and Hop followed suit.

"Now, then," whispered our hero, "we will each do a certain part in this. Charlie, you try to get a couple of horses for the prisoners to ride, in case we manage to get them; Hop, you sneak up and do something to attract the attention of the redskins away from their prisoners, and I will try and liberate them. It is going to be a big risk, for there are so many of them that we won't stand a very good chance."

But neither the scout nor the Chinaman seemed to fear the risk, so they all set out to do what they could.

CHAPTER IV.

HOP GETS READY FOR BUSINESS.

Though the stars were shining, it was very dark in the neighborhood of the Apache camp.

On one side of it was a high bluff, the river, which was very narrow at that point, flowing on the other.

Across the stream the bluffs were still higher, and this shut off a great deal of the light.

The rocks were so numerous and the trees that grew in groups close to the edge of the river stood our hero and his two companions in good stead just then, for they concealed their approach.

Hop had learned a great deal from Wild and his partners, and he could get along without making much noise.

The three kept together until they were within a few yards of the sentries that had been posted by the old chief.

As dark as it was, they had no trouble in picking out two of the braves who were doing guard duty, and Wild made up his mind that they must go between them in order to get into the camp.

Having selected the spot, he proceeded to work his way ahead, followed by Charlie and the Chinaman.

Slowly they neared the critical point, and when they were there an Apache was within twenty feet of them on either side.

But luck was with them, for just then one of the redskins had something to tell the other, and he walked over to him, passing the clump of bushes the three were crouching behind so close that he caused it to move.

The moment he began talking in low tones with the other brave our friends started to moving.

They had to do it quickly, for there was no telling how soon the Indian might come toward them.

There was another thing they had to contend with, and that was the dogs.

Just now they were remarkably quiet, and should any of them happen to note the approach of the intruders the whole pack would start to barking.

But the dogs of Indians have a way of barking for nothing at all, and if such a thing did happen it might not be noticed.

Young Wild West was pretty sure that the Apaches had no idea that there was any one around spying on them, and that probably made them less vigilant, though the sentries were stationed close enough together to be pretty sure of discovering a spy, unless he was a very clever one.

It happened that those creeping into the camp were all expert at that sort of business, even to the Chinaman, who was not supposed to understand such business.

Nearer and nearer crept the trio, and the next minute they were right in the rear of the crooked line of tepees.

They had worked their way through the sentry line all right, and that was half the battle.

The next thing to do was to accomplish their purpose and then get out of the camp.

Getting out would really be the easiest part of it, for they had the darkness to cover them as they ran, and, though they would be chased, beyond a doubt, they would depend upon their horses to get away.

But Wild did not mean that they should be forced to flee from pursuit, if he could help it.

He motioned his companions to get their ears close to him now, and when they had done so he said, speaking in a very low whisper:

"Now comes the time. Hop, I want you to manage it so you are not discovered. Do something to attract the attention of the redskins near the prisoners, but make them think that it is done by some supernatural means—work your magic on them. You know pretty well what I mean. I don't want you to get caught by them, but you must get to your horse the same time as we do."

"Me undelstand, Misler Wild," was the reply. "Me fixee, so be."

If Wild had not believed that he did understand and that he was perfectly able to carry out what he thought was best, he would have instructed him further.

He had seen too much of the clever Chinaman's ways to doubt him now.

Charlie now started for the place where the horses were tethered, while Wild and the Chinaman worked their way toward the prisoners.

They could not see them yet, but our hero knew just about where they were, if they had not been changed to some other part of the camp since he was there before.

The two went on around the tepees and soon a dog began barking.

But they paid little attention to this, and kept on moving.

As we have stated, the lodges and tepees were quite numerous, and as only about half a dozen fires were burning, and they rather low, at that, the darkness was deep enough for their purpose.

The dogs continued barking, but Wild soon came to the conclusion that they had not been disturbed by their approach.

As they reached the fifth or sixth tepee in the row they came in sight of the chief's lodge and the prisoners, who were sitting on the ground beneath a thick-leaved tree, and quite near it.

Our hero scanned their faces as best he could, and he noticed that while the darky appeared to be much dejected, his boss was taking it coolly.

"A queer fellow that," he thought. "I reckon he is made of the right sort of stuff, all right. Well, that means that he will be of some help to us."

He then told Hop to proceed and to use his own judgment, while he himself would creep up close to the tree under which the captives were sitting, with their wrists and ankles tied by stout thongs.

Hop nodded and crept away around the next tepee.

Wild wanted to give him all the time he could, so he moved rather slowly.

He halted behind a tepee, however, for he heard the low, crooning voice of a squaw singing her infant to sleep.

The snoring of her spouse could be heard, too, which told him that at least one of the Indians of the camp was sound asleep, early as it was.

Wild remained there for fully three minutes, and then he started to work his way to the coveted spot.

Some of the larger of the children were playing about, and the boy knew that if one of them should happen to see him it would be just as bad as though it was a warrior.

The alarm would be given, and that meant a hasty flight and probably capture.

Meanwhile Hop was making rapid headway.

As he drew nearer he took a good look at the captives, and when he observed how disconsolate the darky looked he could not help grinning.

"Niggee man allee same feelee velly muchee bad, so be," he muttered, under his breath. "He allee samee dancee when him gittee loose, allee same. Me gittee flee velly muchee quicke. Um ledskins takee velly easy."

Then his gaze suddenly fell upon the tepee of the snake charmer.

It was in such gaudy colors and the objects painted upon it were so hideous in appearance that Hop thought he might have suddenly dropped back into Northern China and landed among some of the wild heathens.

But he only grinned and nodded with satisfaction.

Wild told him how the medicine man had promised the captives that they should be bitten by rattlesnakes until they could not longer see, and then they were to be burned at the stake.

He took it for granted that the medicine man occupied this particular tepee, for he had seen similar ones many times before.

As luck would have it, Yellow Dog came out just then and began strutting up and down before his tepee.

The groups of Apaches scattered about at once ceased their conversation and watched him in a fearsome way.

There was no doubt that the medicine man had a great hold upon their superstition.

Hop grinned more than ever this time.

He was now almost directly behind the tepee of Yellow Dog, and to reach it he would have to pass another and partly expose himself.

But it was worth taking the risk, he thought.

Before trying it, however, he quickly cut a slender sapling that was perhaps eight feet in length.

Then he produced a piece of thin twine that was easily three yards long and, taking the rubber rattler from his pocket, he tied one end of the string to the tail.

The other end was quickly made fast to the smaller end of the sapling.

Then the clever Chinaman took a square object from another pocket and gave a nod of pleasure.

The square object was roughly made and seemed to be nothing more than a bunch of wrapping paper, with a string tied about it.

But it was something more than that, as will be seen.

Getting low to the ground, the Celestial crept softly by the dangerous spot and got to the rear of the medicine man's tent.

Notwithstanding that our hero had told him that the medicine man had several rattlesnakes, Hop made ready to go into the tepee.

He peeped around the side and saw the wonderful medicine man still stalking up and down, with a majestic tread.

Then Hop made a long slit in the back of the tepee with his keen-edged knife.

He applied his eye to the opening and could see right through, as the flap of the tepee was open.

Two more slits and the opening was large enough for him to crawl through.

Without any hesitation the clever Chinaman entered the tepee that was forbidden to every one save Yellow Dog himself.

Something was going to happen that would not only surprise the Ghost Dancers, but the clever fiend who was leading them on as well.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLIE GETS A COUPLE OF HORSES.

Cheyenne Charlie seemed to have struck luck, too, for he managed to get right among the horses belonging to the Indians with but little trouble.

Since there were as many as half a dozen guards stationed about the camping site, the Apaches had no reason to keep a watch on their horses, which were all grazing inside the lines, near the river bank.

Charlie knew that Wild would make for the spot where their own horses had been left the instant he got ready to leave, so he decided that the best thing he could do was to get a couple of them over there, and be ready when the time came.

But to creep past the sentries was one thing and to lead horses past them was another.

The redskin guards must be got away in some fashion.

The scout was not long in hitting upon a plan.

He thought it over quickly, and his conclusion was to get the two horses as close as he could to the line of the sentries and then wait for Wild and Hop to come.

As soon as he heard them he would throw a stone into the river, and the splash would undoubtedly draw the guards there to find out what it meant.

If this would not suffice some other means would have to be used.

He got a couple of the best horses he could find, and then, putting bridles on them, started to lead them away.

As there were plenty of bushes and trees there, this was not a hard thing to do.

But he had not gone more than a dozen feet when he heard footsteps and saw the form of a man approaching.

It was one of the sentries, and he was coming directly toward him, for what purpose he did not know.

The scout drew his keen-edged hunting knife and thought, grimly:

"It's got ter be me or you, you red galoot! I don't want it ter be me, so look out fur yourself!"

Crouching low behind a bush, with the bridle reins in his hand, the daring scout waited.

But it was not for long, for in a few seconds the Indian brave was there.

He paused and showed signs of surprise at seeing the two horses away from the rest.

Then he stepped up to them, evidently for the purpose of catching them and leading them back.

Cheyenne Charlie got ready for business.

It occurred to him that it would be better to strike the redskin down with the butt of his revolver than to kill him with the hunting knife.

Though he did not value the life of a hostile Indian any more than he did that of a snapping coyote, the scout knew that it was not our hero's policy to take a human life, unless it was absolutely necessary.

He quickly changed his revolver to the hand that had been holding the knife in readiness.

The Indian stepped up and caught the two horses by their heads.

Then he tried to lead them back to the rest.

But the scout was holding the bridle reins, so they did not move.

The Apache gave a grunt of anger and disgust at what he thought was the stubbornness of the horses.

Then he gave a hard tug and the animals began to rear and plunge.

Cheyenne Charlie thought it high time he acted, so he arose as quick as a flash.

Thud!

The butt of his heavy Smith & Wesson revolver came down upon the head of the angered brave.

Down he went like a log, for the blow had stunned him completely.

Charlie quieted the horses and then turned his attention to the redskin.

He always carried more or less of stout cord about him, for he never knew just when he might need it.

It did not take him long to bind the unconscious Indian, and then he made a sort of gag from a part of the

clothing his victim had on and settled all possible chance of his crying out when he came to.

The noise all this had caused had not been noticed by the other guard, because he had seen his companion going that way, and he no doubt took it for granted that he had been attracted there by some disturbance among the horses.

Charlie now led the horses slowly through the wood and undergrowth.

But he soon saw that it would be impossible for him to get through the lines without being seen by the other guard.

"However, he had made pretty good headway, and he was more than satisfied with what he had accomplished.

However, he had made pretty good headway, and he wanted to go further, and he was going to do it, unless something extraordinary happened.

Tying the horses to a tree, he went after the other guard.

If he got him out of the way he would have an easy thing of it, and, realizing that he had no time to lose, he got a hasty move on.

Charlie grasped the same weapon he had used so successfully on the other fellow, and steadily he drew near the unsuspecting redskin.

At length only a distance of ten feet lay between them.

The brave took a notion just then to go to the bank of the river.

Charlie went after him as noiselessly as a ghost.

The Apache did not pause until he reached the bank, and when the scout saw that he was bent on getting a drink he gave an inward chuckle.

Stealthy as a cat, he crept forward and, leaning over, he made ready to strike the brave as he made a move to rise.

But just then the edge of the bank caved in and the Indian slipped and fell partly in the water.

Charlie reached for him and succeeded in getting hold of his shoulder.

But the Apache realized what was up right away, for there was enough starlight there for him to see that it was a white man who had attacked him.

He opened his lips to let out a cry of warning, but before he could do it the scout's hand caught him by the throat and the cry froze on his lips.

Up on the bank Charlie pulled him, and then a fierce struggle began.

"Surrender, yer measly coyote!" exclaimed the scout, in a whisper. "If yer don't keep quiet I'll have ter put an end to yer, that's all!"

But the Indian managed to get hold of his knife, and, throwing back his hand, he made a savage lunge at his opponent.

By good luck Charlie dodged the blow, and then he brought his revolver down on the redskin's skull, with a thud.

No human being could withstand such a blow as that, and down went the second victim to his knees.

He gasped and fell over, Charlie taking care to swing him around so he did not go into the water.

Then it was that Charlie had all he could do.

With the Indian trying hard to deal him a stab with

the knife and he holding his throat, so he could not utter a cry, he certainly had his hands full.

True he could easily have despatched him by dealing him a few more blows, but he did not want to do that.

But the struggles of the Apache quickly subsided.

The blow had really been too much for him and, with his wind shut off by that awful grip on his neck, he soon collapsed entirely.

"There!" muttered Charlie, as he let go of him. "I reckon you're done fur—fur a while, anyhow!" But he was not satisfied to leave him thus, for he knew only too well that he would return to consciousness in a few minutes.

With the rope and piece of the redskin's clothing he soon fixed him the same as he had done with the other.

The scout now quickly returned and got the horses.

It was easy for him to lead them over the sentry line now, for there was not an Apache within a hundred yards of him.

Then the woods and bushes made it possible for him to proceed without being discovered.

The daring scout soon got the Indian ponies to the spot where his and Wild's horse were tied.

This done, he set out to return to the camp, so he might be of some assistance to Wild and the Chinaman.

He took a look at both Indians before he went on in.

The last one he had tackled was evidently unconscious, but the other was wide awake, and doing his best to break his bonds and let out a cry of warning to his people.

Charlie gave him to understand that if he did not remain perfectly still he would suffer death, and then he hastened for the tepees.

It had not taken him much over ten minutes to do all he had accomplished and, wondering what Wild was up to so long and what was hindering Hop from trying his game, he crept around to where the prisoners were.

As he neared the spot he heard a voice exhorting in the language of the Apaches, and, raising his head, he saw a fantastically dressed redskin doing a dance before the two prisoners, and talking away at the same time.

"That's ther medicine man what's got ther snakes," he muttered. "I feel jest like lettin' him have a bullet, 'cause ther cavalrymen said as how he was ther cause of ther outbreak. Well, he'll git what's comin' ter him afore this thing is over, see if he don't! Hello! What's that? Hop's gittin' in his fine work now, as sure as guns!"

A sputtering mass of different colored sparks was shooting up from the fire that was directly in front of the medicine man's tepee.

Cheyenne Charlie knew what had caused this.

The clever Chinaman must be right close to the spot, and he crept nearer, so he could be on hand when Wild cut the prisoners loose.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MEDICINE MAN GETS A SURPRISE.

Darius Greenwood made out that he was indifferent as to what went on, and so well did he act that even the

chief and the snake-charming medicine man were deceived.

The ducky, however, was much dejected, and he did not try to conceal it.

The fact was that the old man was not so much worried about the loss of his stock in trade as he was about what was going to become of him.

He had not dreamed of such a thing as meeting a big band of hostile Indians, and he had been quite a little time in believing that they really were hostile.

But there was no doubt about it now, and as he sat on the ground, trying hard to figure out a way of getting out of the scrape he was in with a whole skin, the minutes flitted by and darkness came on.

One thing about it, the redskins saw fit to give the captives something to eat, and though the meat was not half cooked and lacked enough salt to flavor it, they were hungry, and swallowed as much of it as they thought advisable to keep up their strength.

Julius Napoleon would not have eaten a mouthful if his boss had not advised him to, so when he tried to do so he found that his appetite overcame his fear sufficiently to get the supper down.

After the evening meal was over the squaws and children of the camp formed a sort of parade and marched around to inspect the two captives.

Then it was that the situation became more unpleasant than ever, for sticks and stones were thrown at them, and some of the old men of the band spat upon them and called them hard names.

But the Yankee peddler bore it all with a grim sort of fortitude that was to be commended, for few would have let it pass without crying out for mercy.

The ducky did this several times, and each time he got harassed all the more.

After a while the sport subsided, and then the two were left to themselves.

But it was not for long, for when the medicine man came out of his tepee and began stalking up and down in such a pompous way Darius Greenwood felt that something was going to happen.

He was surely right, though it was hardly the medicine man who was going to cause it.

But Yellow Dog was up to something, just the same.

When he had spent fully ten minutes in walking up and down, the inmates of the camp remaining silent meanwhile, he suddenly darted toward his tepee again.

At that very moment Hop Wah was inside!

The clever Chinaman was getting ready to do something that would attract the attention of the Apaches, and thus afford Young Wild West an opportunity to release the prisoners.

It was only by the greatest of good luck that Hop was enabled to hide himself under a blanket in time to escape being detected by the medicine man.

He managed to do it, however, and, remaining perfectly quiet, he waited to find out what was going to happen.

The light from the fire that had been kindled especially for the benefit of Yellow Dog enabled him to peer from under the edge of the blanket and watch what the redskin did.

First he put a big necklace of rattling bones and cat-

tle horns about his neck, and then he went to the other side of the tepee, which was an extra large one, and lifted a square box that might have contained soap at one time from the ground.

Then he went outside and placed the box on the ground before the two prisoners.

Darius Greenwood looked at the box suspiciously, for he noticed that there was a netting of fine wire over the top of it in lieu of a lid.

"Yellow Dog, the great medicine man of the Apaches, will show the paleface and the black man the snakes that will bit them until they cannot see to-morrow after the sun sets, and the Ghost Dancers dance until the great change shall take place," said the villainous trickster.

"Yer needn't mind about showin' 'em to us; wait till ther time comes," replied the peddler, quickly. "Rattle-snakes ain't ter my likin', anyhow."

"Fo' de Lor'!" groaned the ducky. "I'se done be gone sure if de snakes bite me!"

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Julius Napoleon," spoke up the Yankee. "Gittin' afraid never done no one any good yet. If we must see ther snakes, why, we'll see 'em, that's all."

Yellow Dog nodded.

"Paleface heap much brave," he said. "He die to-morrow night, and the Ghost Dancers will please the Great Spirit. All the palefaces will be driven back to the sea, and the redmen will have the hunting grounds of their forefathers."

"That sounds very nice, Mister Medicine Man," answered Greenwood, who was making a wonderful bluff at being cool and indifferent. "I'm mighty sure that you'll never drive ther palefaces out of this country, no matter how much your ghost dancin' an' your Great Spirit wants it done. Ther white man has come here ter stay, an' ther redman has got ter do as he says, too. There ain't enough of yer ter stop their progress, fur westward ther course of civilization takes its way!"

Yellow Dog did not seem to take much stock in the captive's view of the matter.

He gave a grunt, and then he tipped over the box, lifting the screen slightly at the same time.

Out rolled a rattlesnake that was fully three feet in length.

The reptile quickly coiled itself and the whirring sound of its rattles rang out.

Then Yellow Dog coolly grabbed it by the neck and let the coils wind about his arm.

The eyes of all the Indians who could see him, including those of Big Cloud, were instantly fixed upon him.

The medicine man stepped up and placed the fangs of the snake within an inch of the ducky's nose.

"Don't!" gasped Julius Napoleon, who was so frightened that he could not raise his voice.

Next the reptile's head went close to the nose of Greenwood.

The man never flinched, though it was plain that it was only by a great effort that he did not.

As the medicine man pulled back the snake it managed to wriggle partly from his hand, and then it turned and bit him on the arm.

The redskin uttered a sharp cry as he felt the sting of

the fangs, but he quickly recovered and made very light of it.

But, as has been stated before, the poison had been drawn from the reptile's fangs, and there was no danger.

The Apaches did not know this, however, and they thought that the medicine man bore a charmed life, since he never did anything to try and allay the effects of the poison when one of his snakes happened to bite him.

But it was evident that he thought he had fooled enough with it for the time, for he put the snake back into the box and closed the screen.

Then he began delivering an oration to the braves, and in a minute or two he started in to dancing a few steps of the ghost dance, just to show them how it was done.

Hop was now ready for business.

He had the sapling, with the snake hanging from the end of it, ready, and the small package he intended to use was in his right hand.

The blazing fire was but a few feet from the tepee and, gauging the distance, he let the package go.

It struck almost in the centre of the fire, and as the medicine man was making so much noise, and was being watched so closely, it was not noticed.

In just about ten seconds there was a sharp, hissing noise, and then a column of colored sparks shot upward from the fire.

There is no doubt that every Indian there but the medicine man himself thought he was the cause of the unusual spectacle.

Yellow Dog ceased his gyrations instantly.

He stared at the flying sparks and did not open his mouth.

While it was really sheer astonishment, the spectators thought he was communing with the Great Spirit.

But if he was communing with anybody or anything, he was rudely disturbed, for the next moment something hit him on the shoulders, and, turning his gaze upon it, he found what he thought to be one of his own snakes flying around him, as though it was a bird.

Then it was that the great medicine man and snake charmer let out a yell that was plainly one of fear and dropped to the ground upon all fours.

He began beating the ground with his fists, and, spell-bound at the remarkable sight, the redskins kept their eyes fixed upon him.

The snake had disappeared by this time, and as it went the bonds of the two captives were severed and a voice whispered close to their ears:

"Creep back here! Hurry! Just follow me, and make no noise."

It was Young Wild West who was talking to them.

The clever Chinaman had surely attracted the attention of the Apaches long enough to permit him to liberate the prisoners, and now, unless something turned up, they stood a pretty good chance of getting out of the camp before their absence was discovered.

The moment Hop saw them creep out of sight he went out through the back of the tepee, taking his rubber snake with him.

The medicine man was still pounding the ground with his hands, for it was evident that he had not yet been

able to make himself understand the cause of the remarkable happenings of the past few minutes.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW DANGER THREATENS.

Young Wild West was almost compelled to pull the darky along, but not so with Darius Greenwood.

He was perfectly alive to the situation, and he showed considerable skill, too, in the art of moving along without making noise.

"You come right on, and don't you make a bit of noise, if you want to get away," our hero whispered in the ear of Julius Napoleon. "I reckon you've got a little sense in that thick skull of yours, haven't you?"

"Yes, boss," answered the darky, speaking aloud.

Wild quickly thrust the muzzle of his revolver under his nose.

"Just make another sound like that and I'll shoot you!" he threatened.

Then the colored man awoke to the realization that he must do as he was told.

Wild hurried along, forcing the darky to keep up with him, and he headed straight for the place where the lines of the camp had been crossed.

The three had not proceeded more than fifty yards when they were met by Cheyenne Charlie.

"Come right ahead," whispered the scout. "Git up an' trot along softly. Ther way is clear, 'cause I've got two of ther varmints fixed so they can't give ther alarm."

Wild arose to his feet, lifting the darky up bodily.

"You step mighty easy," he said, sternly. "You've got to act the way I want you to, or you'll be left here for the redskins to clean you out. Do you understand what I say?"

This time there was a nod for a reply, and then our hero was satisfied that the worst of it was over.

The four hurried through the woods and bushes, and just as they were passing through the line of the guards they heard soft footsteps following them.

Though they felt pretty sure that it was Hop coming, Wild and Charlie crouched down and held their revolvers in readiness.

The next moment the unmistakable form of the clever Chinaman showed up, and then, well satisfied with what they had accomplished, they hastened for the horses.

Luck was with them, for nothing occurred to make them believe that the escape of the prisoners had been discovered.

"I never saw anything work as well as that before," our hero declared, as he assisted the still frightened darky to mount the Indian pony that was waiting for him. "That galoot of a medicine man is as much scared as the rest. They think it was he who performed the colored fire trick, and he is wondering what made such a curious thing happen. We have got them now, so all we must do is to ride on about our business."

"I don't know who you fellers are, but I know that you're all right, though!" exclaimed Darius Greenwood,

as he mounted the horse Charlie turned over to him. "As soon as we're safe away from ther Injuns I'm goin' ter thank yer from ther bottom of my heart, I am!"

"Never mind about that," the scout answered. "Jest light out, now!"

The peddler said no more, but started his horse after Hop, who was leading the way.

Young Wild West brought up the rear.

They had got perhaps three hundred yards from the camp when they heard a great commotion start.

"They have found out that the prisoners have got away," said Wild. "Now we can let our horses go. Strike out to the right, Hop. We don't want to lead them to our friends, you know."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," came the reply, and the Chinaman promptly turned in the direction indicated.

The five rode hard now, for they knew they must not tarry any, as it would not be long before a score or more of Apaches would be after them.

But our hero was heading for the sandy tract, so they might be able to throw them off the trail.

He knew that it would be impossible to follow a trail through alkali dust in the darkness.

And by the time daylight came the tracks would be obliterated, for the least bit of a breeze would move the light sand and fill them.

Away rode the five, the darky still trembling with fear and excitement and his boss feeling much elated at the rescue.

The yelling of the redskins had not lasted long, which showed that they did not mean to let the fugitives know they were in pursuit, if they could avoid it.

But Wild and the scout knew that they had obtained such a good start that it would be difficult for the redskins to get upon their trail.

It would be luck, more than anything else, if they did.

After ten minutes of swift riding they found themselves upon the sandy patch of desert, among the thorny cactus.

"Now, then, I reckon we can take it a little easy," said our hero, as he slackened his pace. "They won't get here, hardly. It is more likely that they will go on up the river bank."

"An' if they do that they might come across Jim an' ther gals," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

"That is true enough. But if they keep on going they will be apt to elude them. They all know enough for that."

"Gals, did yer say?" asked Darius Greenwood, as he urged his horse alongside the sorrel stallion.

"Yes, we have three ladies with us," Wild replied. "We generally travel around with them."

"Is that so? Say, I'll bet I know who you are!"

"Well, who do you think I am?"

"Young Wild West!"

"Right you are, my friend. You have guessed it the first time."

"Well, I sorter thought you might be him, 'cause you look jest like him, as fur as I heard say. But when you spoke of ther gals, then I was sure it was you. I'm awful glad you happened to be around to save me an' ther coon. We was in a mighty bad box; but I didn't let ther Injuns

know that I thought so. My name is Darius Greenwood, an' I'm a peddler of Yankee notions."

"Yer mean that yer was a peddler afore ther redskins nailed yer," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes, that's ther thing about it. I stand corrected, my good friend."

"The Apaches cleaned you out of all you had to sell, I see," said Wild.

"Yes, they took everything I had. But," and he gave a chuckle, "ther whole kit an' boodle wouldn't amount ter over twenty-five dollars' worth. Sich things as I was sellin' don't cost much in St. Louis, yer know; it's what I sells 'em fur what counts. I don't mind tellin' yer that I've got as high as a dollar fur articles that didn't cost me more'n eight cents."

"I don't doubt that. But it's worth something to fetch such things around where people seldom have the chance of buying them, I suppose."

"I should say so! Why, I was riskin' my life by comin' this way, though I didn't know it. Well, one thing about it, ther Injuns didn't git my money. I've got that sewed in ther linin' of my vest."

"A lucky man, I calls yer!" exclaimed the scout. "How about ther darky? Did he lose his money?"

"I reckon he didn't have any to lose," and the Yankee gave a chuckle as he spoke. "He lost all ther money he had playin' at some kind of gamblin' game in ther minin' camp we stopped at ther day afore yisterday. Julius Napoleon is an awful gambler, he is!"

"Well, it's too bad he ain't got no money, then, fur our Chinaman here would only take it from him. Hop is a gambler, too. But he always wins when he plays."

The darky now awoke to his full senses.

This kind of talk interested him so much that he forgot all about his late danger.

"Nobody done win every time he play," he ventured, shaking his head.

"Is that so?" Charlie answered. "Well, you jest tackle ther heathen once, an' you'll soon find out."

"I'se ain't got no money, but I'se got a fine silver watch," Julius Napoleon went on to say.

"Well, you'd better not put up your watch ag'in Hop's money, that's all I kin tell yer."

"I'se am no 'fraid to play wid any one, sah."

"Allee light, Misler Blackee Man," observed Hop. "You velly muchee smartee; me can tell lat, so be. You no mindee what Misler Charlie say."

Wild now swung around toward the river again.

So far there were no signs of pursuit, and he thought there was a possibility that the Apaches had been fooled completely.

They finally came in sight of the river about ten miles above the spot where they had been camped when the Indians first came in sight.

They halted and listened.

Not a sound could be heard, save the hum of the insects that infested the banks of the river and the usual noises of the forest during the time of darkness.

"I reckon Jim has got further along than this," said our hero. "Come on! We will soon hunt them up."

Once more they rode off at a gallop.

About a mile further on and they were startled by the sounds of rapid firing not far ahead.

Then the warwhoop of redskins rang out.

"Boys," said Young Wild West, coolly, "I reckon Jim and the girls are in trouble. Come on!"

Holding their rifles ready for instant use, Wild and Charlie led the way toward the spot where the disturbance was taking place.

They knew they were badly needed just then, and then meant to give an account of themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARIETTA IS CAPTURED.

Jim Dart and the girls moved along at an easy pace, the Chinese cook following closely, leading the two pack horses.

They kept along close to the river bank, as Wild had advised, and not until at least two miles had been covered did they come to a halt.

Then it was only to listen for the sounds that might indicate that our hero and the scout had been discovered by the Indians in their attempt to release the prisoners.

But nothing was heard, so they set out again.

When a good five miles had been placed between them and the spot they had been camped upon Arietta suggested that they should halt and wait.

The girl was a pretty good judge of such matters, so Jim agreed with her, and they dismounted.

"Just keep the pack horses ready to start in a hurry, Wing," Jim said to the cook. "There is no telling but that we may have to light out in a hurry pretty soon."

"Allee light, Misler Jim," was the reply. "Me be allee leady, so be."

After waiting for about ten minutes Jim grew uneasy.

"I guess I'll take a walk back a little ways and see if there is anything going on back there," he said. "There are some tall trees just below here, and I will climb one of them. I will be able to see the lights of the fires in the Apache camp, I think."

"Very well," answered Arietta, for she was the only one of the three who ever assumed any authority.

The fact was that Anna and Eloise had not been in the West more than two or three years, and they always agreed to what Arietta said, anyhow.

Dart started along the back trail, taking his rifle with him.

The distance to the trees he had spoken of was a little further than he thought, and when he got to them he found that he was nearly a quarter of a mile from his friends.

But he was going to carry out his programme, anyhow, so, selecting one of the trees that was tall and comparatively easy to climb, he slung his rifle over his shoulder and started up.

Jim was not going to leave the weapon at the foot of the tree, for there was no telling what might happen.

He went on up without it interfering much, and was soon near the top.

Then he looked back in the direction they had come.

But it was too dark for him to see anything, and, contrary to his expectations, he could not see the lights from the campfires of the Indians, as a high hill intervened.

The boy remained in the tree fully ten minutes, and then, just as he was about to descend, the sounds made by hoofbeats came to his ears.

"They are coming!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "Good! I'll wait here until I am sure, and then I'll get down in time to hail them."

Nearer came the sounds, and as Jim listened a feeling of uneasiness came over him.

There were more than three horses coming—more than half a dozen, too, if he was any judge of sounds.

This put a different phase on the situation entirely.

"It may be that they are being closely pursued," he muttered. "But I don't see how that could be, for if Wild got any start of them they could never get up close to him. Probably he is laying back with the rest on account of the other horses. Well, I reckon I'll take a hand in it when they get here. It is strange that no shots have been fired, though."

The next thing Jim knew he saw fully a score of horsemen coming.

The light from the stars was sufficient for him to see that they were Indians.

There were no whites among them, either.

The boy was astonished.

Just what to do, he did not know.

If the Indians continued on the way they were going they would surely come upon the girls and the cook, unless they were very quick about hiding.

But when he thought that they would surely think that Wild and Charlie were coming he felt almost certain that they would be discovered.

It was only natural that the boy should come to the conclusion that our hero and the scout had been captured by the redskins.

And most likely Hop had suffered the same fate, and now the red fiends were out to find their companions.

Realizing that he could do nothing with them single-handed, Jim remained in the tree until they got past.

Then he quickly descended and started on a run after them.

But the Indian ponies were going at a sharp gallop, and he stood no show of getting to his friends in time to warn them.

But he made up his mind to let them know that something was wrong.

Pointing his rifle into the air, he fired two shots in quick succession.

Then he took to the woods at the right and made for the camp in a circle.

The next minute several shots rang out, followed quickly by the yells of the Apaches.

"The girls are giving it to them, I reckon," Dart muttered, clenching his teeth. "Oh, I wish I was there!"

Just then a scream rang out, and then the shooting stopped.

It was Arietta who had uttered the scream, Jim knew right away.

Though he was generally a pretty cool hand, he grew very much excited just now.

He continued making the detour, however, and as he heard no more screams or no shooting he gradually returned to his normal state of mind.

Half a minute later he heard the sounds made by the horses' hoofs again, and he knew that the redskins were going back.

"They have caught the girls easily, I suppose," he thought, bitterly. "I made a mistake in leaving. Now we are about as bad off as we could possibly be, for what can I do alone? The only hope is that the cavalry will arrive in the morning some time. Oh, this is too bad!"

Excited and worried, the boy made his way stealthily to the spot where he had left the girls and Wing.

All was as silent as the grave there.

Jim felt that his worst fears were realized.

He waited a couple of minutes, and then, satisfied that the redskins had all vacated the spot, he crept up to the little rise of ground where he had left them while he went to make a tour of investigation.

There was neither human being nor horse to be seen.

Jim walked a little further, and as he emerged into a faint patch of light a whisper came to his ears, saying:

"Misler Jim!"

It was Wing Wah!

A thrill shot through the boy.

"Hello, Wing!" he called out, softly.

"Oh, Misler Jim!"

Then the Chinaman emerged from the bushes, quickly followed by the forms of two females.

Jim ran to them and found Eloise and Anna there.

"Where is Arietta?" he asked.

"Oh, it is terrible!" exclaimed the scout's wife. "If she had only remained here with us! We heard the horses coming and we knew there were too many of them to be Wild and Charlie, so we quickly led the horses down into the hollow here. But Arietta heard two shots, and she mounted her horse to ride out and help fight. Then the Indians met her. She fired half a dozen times with her revolver, and then they got her. Oh, it is too bad!"

"Well," said Jim, trying hard to keep cool, and reasoning pretty well, "it is much better to have Arietta caught than all of you. That is what would have happened if she had not rode out to meet them. She is always cool in times of danger, and she will take care of herself. It is most likely that they have got Wild and Charlie, and possibly Hop. But there is no telling about Hop, though, for he may have gone it alone when they got to the camp of the Apaches. But, though the situation is a mighty bad one, it could be much worse. We must get to a good hiding place at once, for they will be looking for the one who fired the shots, and, not finding me down there, they may take a notion to come back here."

He hurried with them to the horses and, mounting, they rode off at a gallop.

They were not afraid of being heard by the redskins just then, as none of them were close enough.

For two miles they rode, and then, coming to a shallow creek that flowed into the river, they rode up its course for about a hundred yards, and, finding a sloping bank of rock, left it and took to the woods.

They had scarcely begun to think that they were safe for the present when they heard the sounds of hoofs.

As they were coming from a direction that was entirely different from that taken by the redskins, however, Jim did not grow much alarmed.

He called a halt, and then they waited.

In less than a minute five riders were seen passing them, about two hundred feet distant.

Jim Dart recognized three of them right away, in spite of the darkness.

"Wild! Wild!" he called out, softly. "Hello! This way!"

He was heard right away, and the horses changed their course and came toward them.

"So we have found you, eh?" said Young Wild West, as he brought the sorrel stallion to a halt. "Is everything all right, Jim?"

"No, Wild. The redskins have got Arietta!"

"What!"

The dashing young deadshot was amazed.

CHAPTER IX.

ARIETTA AND THE SQUAWS.

Whether or not it was a bad move Arietta had made, considering the danger that all hands were in at the time, cannot be said; but, anyhow, it had resulted in causing her to fall into the hands of the detachment of Apaches from the camp of the Ghost Dancers.

After discovering that the two prisoners had made their escape in some mysterious way Big Cloud, the chief, had called upon Yellow Dog to find a way to restore them at once.

The only thing the medicine man was capable of doing was to urge that a pursuit should be instituted at once, he declaring that if that did not suffice he would call upon the Great Spirit to furnish them with another paleface to be offered as a sacrifice.

Just how the medicine man was going to do this he did not know, but it was probable that he trusted solely to luck.

And, as luck would have it, the party of braves came back with a beautiful paleface maiden in the person of Arietta.

Yellow Dog claimed the credit of this, and he even went so far as to make the statement that he knew it was to be a girl that would take the place of those who had escaped.

The two guards had been found lying in a condition of absolute helplessness, and they were present when the white girl was brought in.

The Indians who had captured the girl had suffered the loss of two of their number, for Arietta had fired so rapidly that her shots took effect before she could be seized and disarmed.

The loss of two of his best fighting braves was anything but pleasant to the old chief, but when the medicine man assured him that it was simply in the natural order of things he became reconciled.

"Paleface maiden will suffer!" he declared, as he looked at the helpless girl in a fierce way. "She will be poisoned by the rattlesnakes, and then she shall be tied to a tree and burned. Her scalp shall be taken while she is yet alive, and it will hang from the lodgepole of Big Cloud."

The medicine man nodded his approval to this, and the chief was satisfied.

Poor Arietta!

She had done her best, but that best had proven disastrous to her.

But she was not the sort of girl to give way to grief and despair over what had happened.

It did not take her long to find out that the prisoners had been rescued by Wild, Charlie and Hop, and this was gratifying to her, especially as she now had her dashing young lover to work until he saved her from the red fiends.

Her remarkable coolness was a surprise to the Apaches, for they had never seen a white girl act that way before when she was virtually facing a cruel death.

Yellow Dog wanted to take her to his tepee and keep her until morning, so she could not possibly be rescued by her friends, but Big Cloud asserted his authority, and the result was that the girl was placed in the charge of the two squaws who had become widows as the result of her shooting at the time of her capture.

This was not so pleasant, either, considering that the squaws had been apprised of how the braves came to their end.

But the chief took pains to caution them that the paleface maiden must not be harmed in the least, since she was to serve as the sacrifice at the great ghost dance that was to take place the following night.

Probably Big Cloud felt sure that there could be no more watchful guards put over her, since the squaws were longing to be revenged upon her.

Arietta's hands had been tied behind her after she had been captured, but the chief now cut them loose, saying, as he did so:

"Paleface maiden try to get away and she get hurt; she no try and she will be safe until the ghost dance."

"All right," answered the brave girl. "I promise you that I will not try to get away unless I see a good chance. You can be sure that I will never be offered as a sacrifice at the ghost dance, though. Young Wild West will save me."

Big Cloud opened wide his eyes at this.

It was evident that he knew of Young Wild West.

"Where Young Wild West?" he demanded, quickly.

"He is not far from here," was the reply. "He will save me."

Big Cloud called two of his trusted braves right away.

"Go and find Young Wild West, the paleface boy, who is the bad enemy of the Apaches," he ordered. "Bring him here before sunrise. Take ten braves with you and search well."

Arietta smiled at this.

The chief noticed it and he became a bit angry.

"Paleface maiden heap much smart," he said. "She will never get away from the Ghost Dancers. Young Wild West will die, too. She knows that, but she makes a smile to fool Big Cloud."

"All right, Big Cloud," Arietta retorted, coolly. "Wait and see."

A word from the chief and she was led away by the two squaws, who scowled at her fiercely, showing how well they would like to make short work of her.

But the brave girl was more than satisfied at the way she had been treated so far.

The fact that she had been allowed the use of her hands was a big relief to her, for she had a small six-shooter hidden in her buckskin bodice, the redskins having failed to find it when they disarmed her of her regular weapons.

The revolver was a gift from Wild on her birthday two years previous, and many times had it stood her in good stead, though of a very small calibre.

A shot from it would not have hurt a grizzly bear much, to be sure, but a bullet in the right place and at short range would an Indian all right.

Arietta did not propose to be tormented by the two ugly squaws, for, as she had the use of her hands, she could defend herself from any attacks they might make upon her.

But she did not mean to use the revolver on them, for that would simply be spoiling her chances of escape.

The squaws dragged her roughly to a nearby tepee and pushed her inside.

"Paleface maiden heap much bad! She kill Apaches!" said one, her form quivering with rage.

"Yes, I shot two of the Apaches," the girl answered, fearlessly. "I did it because I had the right to. If you had been attacked by twenty white men, who meant to take you somewhere and burn you to death, you would try to kill them, too, would you not?"

For an answer the squaw struck at her.

Arietta dodged the blow, and then, as she tried it again, she gave her a push that sent her reeling against the side of the flimsy tepee.

The result was rather unexpected, for the whole thing tumbled over, leaving the three struggling in its folds.

Several other squaws, and some of the braves, too, ran to the scene and quickly righted things.

So enraged were the two widows now that they both pitched in to do injury to the brave girl.

But Arietta got out of the way and, picking up a stout stick, proceeded to defend herself.

The outdoor life she led was a great benefit to her in the way of giving her strength and agility, and in just about half a minute she had both squaws beaten to a standstill.

Up came the old chief in time to see the finish of the short fight.

"What the matter?" he asked, looking at Arietta and pointing to the vanquished squaws, who were rubbing the bruises they had received in the short bout.

"They wanted to kill me, I guess," replied the girl. "I did not propose to allow them to do it, not as long as I could defend myself. If you are going to keep me a prisoner here I ask you to place some one else to guard me. They hate me so that they won't stop until they do kill me."

"Ugh!" grunted the chief.

Then he took the stick from Arietta's hand and began to belabor the squaws with it.

They did not beg for mercy, but stood their ground and took it with great stoicism.

There was considerable talk in the Apache lingo and the result was that the captive girl was taken to another tepee and placed in the charge of a young squaw, who happened to be single and in no danger of becoming a widow.

This squaw acted a little kindly toward the girl, and it took Arietta less than two minutes to realize that she had found just the least bit of a friend in her.

The other two squaws were stationed outside the tepee and commanded to stay there until sunrise, under penalty of being put to death.

Laughing Flower was the name of the young squaw, and as Arietta got to conversing with her she really began to like her.

"The paleface maiden must not be bitten by the snakes of the medicine man," said Laughing Flower, as she put her lips close to the fair captive's ear. "The medicine man is much humbug; me no like, but me come because my father make me. Me be friend to paleface maiden."

"Thank you, Laughing Flower," answered Arietta, warmly. "There are some good Apaches, and you are one of them. You have been to school, and you have learned that it is wrong for the Indians to catch palefaces and put them to death. You are a good girl."

"Laughing Flower is pleased with the paleface maiden. What her name, please?"

"Arietta is my name."

"Arietta shall not die."

CHAPTER X.

ARIETTA RECEIVES A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

Arietta and Laughing Flower conversed for about half an hour.

Then they were interrupted by hearing a guttural voice at the entrance of the tepee.

"It is the snake charmer—the medicine man," whispered the squaw. "He comes for no good!"

"Ugh!"

A grunt sounded and then a head was thrust in the opening.

A fire was burning about a dozen feet away and there was enough light from it for the two to see the hideous, painted face of the villainous medicine man.

"Me Yellow Dog," he said. "Me come to talk to paleface maiden."

"I don't feel like talking just now," Arietta answered, with all the coolness she could command. "Big Cloud said I should be left alone here. You go and mind your own business!"

"Ugh!"

Then he came on inside and squatted on the ground so close to where the two were sitting that Arietta arose to her feet.

The medicine man quickly arose, too.

"Me come to tell paleface squaw that she can live if she wants to," he said.

"I expect to live a while longer, anyhow. You needn't come and tell me," was the retort.

"You no live after my snakes bite you! You no live after the fire burns! You heap much fool to talk like that, White Squaw!"

Laughing Flower was plainly afraid of the villain, for she did not deign to say a word, but sat as far away as she could get from him.

"Yellow Dog, the great medicine man of the Apaches, has never had a squaw," went on the snake charmer, as he laid his hand on the girl's arm in a way that was meant to be gentle.

Arietta struck him a blow on the wrist and knocked his hand aside.

"You will never live to have one, if you don't keep your hands off me!" she exclaimed.

"Ugh!"

"I mean what I say, you villainous, old wolf!" the girl declared, her eyes flashing dangerously.

It would have taken but little more to make her draw her revolver and shoot the old reprobate; but he was wise enough to keep his hands away from her.

He kept on talking, however, and finally he lowered his voice and said:

"Beautiful paleface squaw, you can live if you will be the squaw of Yellow Dog, the great medicine man of the Apaches. You shall be made his quaw by the laws of the tribe, and you shall have seven ponies, as many blankets as two braves can carry and all the money Yellow Dog has. You will not die, but live like the wife of the Great Father of Washington. Yellow Dog is rich; he has money and he has cattle and horses."

"How about the sacrifice you want to offer to the Great Spirit to-morrow night?" asked Arietta, sneeringly.

She was not much alarmed at the way he talked, for the revolver in her possession made her feel safe from him.

"The paleface squaw will not be the sacrifice, for she must be the squaw of Yellow Dog after the ghost dance is over. Then there will be no more palefaces here, and she will turn the color of the redman. She will be a great princess, and she will wear all the precious stones that she wants to. Yellow Dog loves her, as the palefaces call it. He will make her a fine husband, for he is powerful, and he can make all his people do his bidding."

Arietta listened to every word he said.

When he said that she would become his squaw after the ghost dance was over she decided to lead him on just a little.

"Yellow Dog has spoken too quick," she observed, shaking her head. "I must have time to think. I must have until sunset to-morrow. Then I will give him my answer. If all the palefaces but me are to die, and I am to turn to be an Indian, I would marry Yellow Dog. But I must think—I must have time to think!"

"All right. Think, paleface squaw; but think right. If you no think right the rattlesnakes will sting you, and your scalp will hang at the lodgepole of Big Cloud, and your body will be burned to ashes!"

"Good night, Great Medicine Man!"

"Good night, Paleface Squaw!"

Out he went and, with a sigh of relief, Arietta turned to the squaw and said, in a whisper:

"I settled him for a while, I think. Didn't I, Laughing Flower?"

"Arietta is very brave; her brain is great! She knows how to talk to even a medicine man. Laughing Flower is proud to be her friend."

They both peered out of the tepee and saw the old villain stalking over to his tepee.

It was evident that he thought he had made pretty sure of getting a paleface wife, and now was thinking of how he was going to make out for a human sacrifice to take her place at the ghost dance.

But he was really depending on the braves who had been sent out to return with at least one paleface prisoner.

The hours passed on.

After having been assured by the young squaw that she need have no fear, Arietta lay down and tried to go to sleep.

But it was a long time before she did, and then Laughing Flower watched over her as a mother does a sick babe.

It was a curious, not to say, wonderful, thing that the squaw should take such a liking to the girl. But probably it was because she had been educated a little and knew the difference between right and wrong.

Shortly after daylight in the morning the redskins were astir.

It was the chief's orders that they should move as soon as the morning meal was over.

He was anxious to get to the spot that had been selected for the ghost dance, so that the great transformation the medicine man had promised could be wrought.

But it must be said that since Yellow Dog had acted so strangely when the snake had whirled about him the night before, Big Cloud was just the least bit suspicious of him.

Beyond the way he could handle the snakes he had in the box, he had never seen the man do anything that was wonderful.

The fact was that Big Cloud had his suspicions that the colored fire had been caused by those who had spirited away the two prisoners, for he had recalled that the medicine man seemed much afraid of it.

Added to this, he learned that Yellow Dog had told the captive white maiden that she should not be sacrificed if she would become his squaw.

Big Cloud was a very shrewd redskin.

He could "put two and two together," as the saying goes, and he began to think that perhaps the wonderful change over the land of the Apaches might not take place, even if the Ghost Dancers did get in their fine work and a sacrifice was offered to the Great Spirit.

Yellow Dog did not deign to hold a consultation with the chief that morning.

He had his breakfast brought to his tepee and ate it without showing himself.

Meanwhile Arietta was getting anxious about Wild and the rest of her friends.

She knew they were being hunted for, but she felt that they would not go so very far away from the Ghost Dancers so long as she was a prisoner in their hands.

Just as the Indians were getting ready to move away the searching party returned.

They brought no prisoners with them, and when Arietta saw this she felt greatly relieved.

The medicine man came out of the tent and quickly asked what had been accomplished.

The reply was that no traces of Young Wild West and the escaped prisoners had been found.

"Ugh!" was the reply. "But they will be found before sunset. The Great Spirit whispered to me while I slept with my snakes wrapped around me that there must be more than one sacrifice, and that it should be Young Wild West, the hated enemy of our tribe, and one or more of his friends. It will come! The sacrifice must come when the time is at hand."

Yellow Dog spoke in the language of his followers, so even if Arietta had been close enough to hear she would not have understood what he said.

Arietta was placed upon her own horse, and, with Laughing Flower and the two widowed squaws in charge of her, she rode off in about the centre of the long cavalcade.

It was not the first time the brave girl had been in such a predicament, so she took it all very coolly.

Though Laughing Flower had promised to aid her to escape, there had not been the least chance of it so far.

But that the chance would come, sooner or later, Arietta felt sure.

A party of braves went on ahead to make a search for the trail of Young Wild West, and to capture him, if it were any way possible.

But noon came, and nothing had been accomplished yet.

There was one uneasy person in the crowd, at least, and that one was Yellow Dog.

The villainous medicine man felt that unless the girl captive was offered as a sacrifice, in case they got no other, he would lose his power over the fanatics, who believed in him.

The medicine man's real troubles were only just beginning, as will be seen.

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT OF QUIETNESS.

Young Wild West, though much surprised at finding that his sweetheart was not with the party, did not grow excited.

"How did they get her, Jim?" he asked.

"I was not here at the time," Dart answered. "I went forward to climb a tree, in the hopes I might see you returning, and while I was up there the redskins came along. When I first heard them I thought you were coming, but I soon discovered that there were too many for that. It was too late to descend the tree and run back then, so I stayed there until they got past, and then came down and fired a couple of shots to warn the girls. Anna and Eloise say that Arietta insisted on mounting her horse to come out and give a hand, for she thought you

were being pursued by redskins. There was some quick shooting when she met them, and then she screamed, showing that they got her. That is about all there is to it, Wild."

"Well, that is quite enough," was the reply. "I reckon we've got another job on our hands. But it can't be undertaken to-night, for the Apaches will be waiting all around for such a thing to happen. It is a wonder that we are not being chased at this very minute, since they know that Arietta must have friends somewhere about."

"What are you going to do, then, Wild?" asked Jim, anxiously.

"About the very best thing we can do is to look for a good hiding place, and then lay low until to-morrow morning. There is one thing sure about it, Arietta won't be harmed by the Ghost Dancers until to-morrow night, anyhow. Mr. Greenwood says that the great time is to take place to-morrow night. The Ghost Dancers are going to dance all the palefaces out of existence, and one has got to be offered as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit. They would like to have more than one, I suppose—as many as they can get, in fact. They are on the warpath, and they mean that no white person shall escape."

"I reckon they'll find out that they've made a big mistake," Cheyenne Charlie remarked. "That foolish galoot of a medicine man will be putty much surprised afore he cleans out all ther palefaces an' brings back ther land as it was in ther time of his grandfather. He kin fool with all ther snakes he wants ter, an' ther redskins kin have all ther dances they feel like; but that ain't goin' ter do nothin' any more than ter fetch out ther cavalry. An' when ther boys in blue git here we'll show ther Ghost Dancers how we kin rout 'em! There won't be many of 'em left, either, I reckon."

"They ought to be whipped good an' hard," spoke up Darius Greenwood, shaking his head. "I never had such an idea as there being a lot of hostiles out, or I wouldn't have come this way with my wagon."

They had now talked about long enough, while at a halt, anyhow, Wild thought, so he gave the word and they rode off.

Just where they could find a place that would be safe for them to stop at he did not know.

But he was pretty sure that there must be plenty of such places in the vicinity, for the country was rugged and wild enough.

Fortunately they struck a little creek, and taking to this they let the horses walk until they reached the narrow ravine.

Once there, our hero felt sure that the redskins would not find them, unless it was from the merest chance, so they dismounted and prepared to make the best of it till morning.

Wild seemed to be the least worried of them all, though it was his sweetheart who was in the clutches of the Ghost Dancers.

But that was his way.

The reader knows pretty well by this time that Young Wild West was not one of the sort who worry.

He had his feelings, just the same, but he had the way to curb them and to look at things with hope as his guide.

"Hop, just get the horses through there," he said, pointing to a narrow part of the ravine. "I have an idea that it widens out there, and there may be some grass there for them. Anyhow, we know there is plenty of water."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," replied Hop, cheerfully. "Me allee samee velly sure lere plenty glass, so be. Come on, my blother; you allee samee gitee lillee movee on you."

The last was said to Wing, who was already at work, and did not need to be told.

"Them Chinese is funny fellers, ain't they?" remarked Darius Greenwood, turning to Charlie.

"Well, you heard what I said about one of them, didn't yer?" replied the scout.

"Oh, yes! Julius Napoleon heard it, too. But still he's willin' ter put up his watch in gamblin' with him."

"I don't care whether he does it or not now. He's been warned. Why, that heathen kin beat ther man what made cards!"

"See here, Boss Charlie!" said the darky, who was paying strict attention to what was being said. "Don' yo' know dat de man what made de cards am dead? A dead man no play poker! Ha, ha, ha!"

The darky actually laughed, it being the first real laugh he had uttered since the Indians had appeared before him that afternoon.

"How do you know ther galoot what made cards is dead?" the scout questioned, sharply. "I'll bet that ther one what made them very cards what Hop has got is livin' this minute!"

"Oh, dat may be so, boss. But I don' t'ink yo' mean de man what made de cards first."

"You thought wrong, didn't yer?"

"Um niggee man allee samee pletty smartee," spoke up Hop, as he came along, carrying the tent he was about to help put up. "He allee samee smartee like Chinees, pletty goodee. He——"

Just then he stumbled, accidentally or from some other cause, and the canvas went over the darky and bore him to the ground, Hop falling hard on top of him.

"Heah!" cried Julius Napoleon, angrily. "Wha' yo' mean, you fool Chinees?"

"Just stop that talking so loud," said Wild. "You fellows seem to have forgotten that we are in danger of being caught by redskins. Stop that funny business, now! If you don't I'll make you sick in a hurry!"

The darky scrambled out, but not a word did he say.

It was evident, though, that he thought the Chinaman had knocked him down purposely, and that he meant to get square with him for it.

Our hero was not in the humor for any nonsense, even if they had not been in danger of being found by the Apaches.

His sweetheart was a captive in the camp of the redskins, and that was quite enough to make him feel anything but jolly.

The work went along sharply now, and it was not long before the camp was in shape for sleeping purposes.

Charlie and Jim had little to say, and Anna and Eloise only talked in whispers.

It was evident that there would not be much sleeping done in the camp by the companions of the lost girl.

Darius Greenwood, though very thankful to them all, soon got sleepy, and he was advised to lie down and get what rest he could.

Then Charlie and Jim followed his example.

The two girls had already retired to the little tent they always occupied as a sleeping quarters with Arietta, and Wing was snoring away, as though there was never such a thing as danger.

Hop and Julius Napoleon were sitting close together under a ledge, and as Wild listened he could hear them talking in whispers.

The boy knew what they were itching for, but he was determined that no gambling was going to take place there that night, unless it was done in the dark.

Finally Hop came over to him and said:

"Misler Wild, me likee havee lantern lit, so be."

"Well, you can't have it," was the quick reply. "You just turn in right away. If you want to play cards with the darky, wait till daylight. Let him turn in, too. I won't stand any fooling to-night."

"Allee light, Misler Wild; me undelstand velly muchee well. You knowee allee light, Misler Wild."

That settled the gambling business, for that night, anyhow.

Wild remained on the watch until about midnight, and then he called Jim to take a couple of hours at it.

Nothing disturbed them, and when Jim had put in his share of the time he called the scout to stand watch until daylight.

In this way the night passed and morning arrived.

Charlie called Wing, and, after telling him to keep a good watch, started off to take a look around the surrounding country.

He knew that it was hardly likely that the Apaches had broken camp yet, but he thought it would do no harm to look around.

He ascended to the high ground on one side of the ravine, and, selecting a tall and straight mountain pine, proceeded to climb it.

Near the top he rested, and then he looked around.

Far back to the east he could see several columns of smoke arising, and then he knew that the redskins were getting ready to have their morning meal.

"I reckon I'm beginnin' ter git a little hungry myself," he muttered, as he descended the tree. "It'll be all right ter kindle a fire down in ther ravine, I reckon. Ther smoke ought ter thin out to nothin' afore it gits high enough ter be seen away back there. I'll jest fix it so there won't be much smoke."

Wing was now wide awake, and a word from the scout started him at work in earnest.

Wild got up just then.

He had slept a little toward morning, and now he was satisfied to begin the task of rescuing his sweetheart from the savages.

Knowing that they intended to move in that direction, he considered that they would have a better chance in the daytime than they would have had the night before, when the Apaches were on the alert.

"Going to start a fire, eh, Charlie?" he said, as he

watched the scout as he piled up some very light brushwood and fagots.

"Yes, Wild," was the answer. "I was jest up that big tree over there, an' I could jest about see ther smoke from ther fires in the 'Pache camp. I reckon they won't be able to see this smoke, though. We're too low down fur that."

"All right. Go ahead; we'll take the chances."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GAME OF DRAW POKER.

It happened that Julius Napoleon was one of the sort of darkies who can rise early.

He heard Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie talking and he promptly got up.

The first thing he thought about was the Chinaman, who was such a wonderful gambler.

He decided to arouse him, and he lost no time in doing so.

"Whatee mattee?" asked Hop, sleepily.

"Yo' git up an' show me wha' yo' know about de cards, Massah Hop," said the darky, grinning at him.

Hop became wide away right away.

He crawled out and hastened to the little brook that flowed through the ravine.

A good application of water to his face and hands made him feel fine, and after that he was ready for Julius Napoleon.

Hop took notice that his brother was getting the breakfast ready, and that Wild and Charlie were the only ones up.

The sun was not up yet, but the east was aglow with its harbinger.

"Whatee timee you gotee, Misler Blackee Man?" Hop asked, as he saw the darky take out his watch and look at it.

"It am jest five o'clock, sah!" was the reply. "But, see here, yo' fool Chinee! Yo' don't have to call me nigger or black man. I'se colored, I is. I'se jest as good as yo' are. Understan' dat!"

"Allee light," was the reply. "You havee velly longee namee, and me no undelstand it. Me callee you Misler Darky, so be."

"Dat ain't right eider. My name is Julius Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson."

"Lat too muchee for me, so be."

"Yo' call me Mistah Johnson; me no wantee touble; me wantee um watchee, so be."

"Well, how much yo' put ag'in dat watch fo' to play three hands of draw poker, best two out of three to win?"

"Me lookee at um watchee; len me tellee you."

Hop took the watch and looked it over.

It was a big, silver, open-faced watch, and might have cost eighteen or twenty dollars when it was first bought.

Hop found that it was in pretty good condition, and he placed a value of twenty-five dollars upon it, which was more than Julius Napoleon Johnson expected.

"Yo' done put up twenty-five dollars ag'in my watch!" he gasped.

"Yes, lat allee light. We play allee samee thlee hands, so be; len we see who wear um watchee."

"Well, dere is de watch; put up de money."

The two had got around behind a rock, so those in the camp could not see them, and as the darky deposited his timepiece on a flat rock Hop counted out the twenty-five dollars and laid it down, taking care to put the watch on top of it, so it could not blow away, for it was in bills.

Johnson was more than pleased.

It was quite evident that he considered that he was going to have an easy thing of it with the Chinaman, even if Cheyenne Charlie had said that he could beat the man who made the cards.

The fact was that the darky was a sort of professional in the way of cheating, and he was putting his faith on his ability.

But he did not know the sort of a fellow he had to deal with.

Hop smiled blandly as he sat down before the flat rock and pulled a new deck of cards from his pocket.

He had both old and new decks in plenty, for he always made it a point to stock up with playing cards every time he got to a place where they were sold.

The eyes of the darky danced when he saw the brand new deck.

"Dat am all right," he declared. "I done have a pack what am putty old an' greasy. Dese cards will play nice."

"Allee samee velly muchee new," answered Hop, innocently. "You allee samee shuffle; len we cuttee for um deal, so be."

Johnson took care to count the cards carefully, and, finding that they were all there, he proceeded to shuffle them in a way that showed how well he was used to handling the pasteboards.

They cut and he won, much to his satisfaction.

"Um bestee two outee thlee hands win, so be," said Hop.

"Yes, we only play three hands; dat plenty to tell who am de boss player," was the reply.

It was just then that Wild and Charlie stepped up, followed by Jim and the Yankee, who had come out of the tent in time to find out what was going on.

Hop looked rather annoyed when he found they had spectators, but when Wild nodded and told him to go ahead he looked cheerful again.

"What are yer playin' fur, anyhow?" the scout asked.

The darky quickly informed him as to the stakes and the terms of agreement.

"Do yer think a good deal of your watch?" the scout queried.

"I wouldn't want to part wid dat watch, sah," was the reply. "A nice white man gib dat to me 'cause I save his horse from runnin' ag'in a train of cars down in Galveston. Dat very fine watch, I tell yo'!"

"Well, you had better kiss it goodby, I reckon."

"Yo' think de Chinees know all about de cards; but jes' wait," said Johnson, confidently. "I done hab two deals out of de t'ree."

The deal was made.

Hop found that he possessed only a pair of treys.

He played the same as an ordinary player would have done and called for three cards on the draw.

He did not improve his hand one bit, and the smile that lit up the dusky countenance of Julius Napoleon Johnson was so wide that the scout laughed outright.

But it was a laugh of pity, as much as anything.

"What hab yo' got, Mistah Hop?" queried the darky.

"Me allee samee gotee lillee pair of treys, so be," was the reply.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

Johnson fairly roared with merriment.

"I'se done got t'ree aces!" he exclaimed. "Yo' lose, Hon! Yo' don' understand de game!"

He laughed some more, and even Wild was forced to smile when he thought how the laugh would be on the other side of his face very shortly.

"You allee samee win de first hand, so be," Hop said, shaking his head, as though he had his doubts about beating him. "Lat allee light. Now me takee lillee deal."

Johnson watched him closely as he dealt, but the Chinaman appeared to do it in such a bunglesome way that he was satisfied that there was going to be no doubt about the outcome.

When he looked at his hand and found that he had three kings cold his eyes bulged with satisfaction and pure delight.

"How many cards you wantee?" Hop asked, blandly.

"Well, seein' dat it's yo', I done take two," was the retort.

The cards were given him, and when he found that one of them was a king he acted as though he was going to have a fit from laughing.

The Chinaman looked at him innocently and observed:

"Whatee mattee?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" laughed the darky. "Dis am great! Draw yo' cards, an' we'll done settle de game." Hop calmly discarded four cards, holding one.

Then he dealt four from the top of the pack and looked at them.

"Whatee you gotee?" he asked.

"Fo' kings!"

The darky roared out so loud that Wild was forced to stop him.

"Don't make so much noise about it," he said. "I'll stop the game if you don't keep more quiet."

"I guess de game am all over, Boss West," came the retort. "I'se a mighty fine——"

He cut his words short, for just then Hop laid down his hand and showed four aces.

"Well, I'll be kicked by a mule!" gasped the surprised darky. "He done hab fo' aces, an' he beat my fo' kings!"

"Lat velly nicee hand, so be," admitted Hop, blandly. "Now you dealee, and we allee samee soonee see who takee um watchee and money."

The negro seemed to have some of the confidence taken from him when he picked up the cards to shuffle them.

He never thought that some of them were missing.

But he was too nervous to think anything like that just now.

They had each won a hand, and this was the one that would settle it.

He tried hard to get the four kings he had held to—

gether, so he would have them in his own hand, but the astonishment at being beaten so badly by the Chinaman caused him to act clumsy, and the first thing he knew he dropped about half the cards to the ground.

When he picked them up they were so badly mixed that he could not tell anything about them.

But he finished the shuffle and Hop cut them.

Then the deal was made.

Julius Napoleon found himself the possessor of three jacks, and this consoled him slightly.

He drew two cards and got a pair of kings with them.

Then his ebony countenance lighted up again.

A full hand was a good one, especially in a two-handed game.

Hop drew four cards, but no one noticed that he also slipped four from his sleeve and contrived to let the four he drew become mixed in the pile on the rock.

"Whatee you gotee, Misler Johnson?" he asked, smiling sweetly at the watch and money.

"I'se done got three jacks an' pair ob kings!" was the reply. "Yo' beat dat, an' yo' beat me!"

"Me allee samee gotee um four lillee aces, some more!" and Hop raked in the watch and money.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MEDICINE MAN AND THE CHIEF.

It was just about four o'clock in the afternoon when the Ghost Dancers reached the spot of ground that had been selected by Yellow Dog and Big Cloud as the place to hold the orgies that would result in making the great change over the land of their forefathers.

It was well up in the fastness of the mountain, on a comparatively level plain that was surrounded by groups of rocks and stunted trees.

The main thing about it was that it was pretty well secluded, as no one could see what was there until the spot was within a couple of hundred yards of them.

The chief at once established a line of pickets and then the work of getting the camp in order was begun.

Arietta had been treated well during the ride nearly the day long, and, though she had been constantly on the alert for some signs of her dashing young lover and his partners, she had not seen a sign that would indicate that they were anywhere about.

Laughing Flower started in to erect the tepee the two were to occupy, and Arietta gladly lent her assistance.

Notwithstanding that the day had almost passed and there were no chances of her getting away from the Indians, Arietta was in quite a cheerful frame of mind.

If it came to the worst she meant to accept Yellow Dog's offer of marriage, and then, when there was no longer any hope, shoot him rather than have the ceremony performed.

She told this to Laughing Flower, and the Indian maiden promised to stand by her if the medicine man was killed.

He was the only one in the entire band that she feared,

and this was not because she thought he possessed any supernatural powers.

She believed him to be a deceitful villain, and, with his snakes, he was able to wield a power over the Apaches.

It was just after the tepee had been put in shape when the chief came over.

He was smoking his long-stemmed pipe, and he appeared to be slightly ill at ease.

"The paleface maiden will die to-night," he said, looking keenly at Arietta, as though to read her thoughts.

"No!" she answered, promptly, shaking her golden head decisively. "I will not die to-night. The Apaches do not dare to take my life."

Big Cloud frowned.

"The paleface maiden must die when the Ghost Dancers begin," he declared. "Big Cloud has commanded it, and it must be so."

"Who is the boss of the Ghost Dancers, Big Cloud or Yellow Dog?" the girl asked, coolly, as she met his gaze unflinchingly.

"Big Cloud is the chief of his tribe," was the reply. "Yellow Dog is the medicine man."

"Well, the medicine man and his rattlesnakes appear to be running things here, if I am any judge. You have nothing to say, Big Cloud. You are like a little child when the medicine man talks. He rules the Apaches. They all fear him, and they will do as he says."

The girl knew that she was touching him in a sore spot when she talked this way, and that was why she did it.

The chief frowned fiercely.

"The medicine man wants to marry the paleface maiden. He wants to make her his squaw!" he exclaimed. "But this shall not be. She must die as the sun goes down!"

"No, you are mistaken, Big Cloud. I will not become the medicine man's squaw, and I will not die when the sun goes down. I have talked with the Great Spirit of the redmen, and he has told me I would not die. He told me, too, that the Apaches have made a mistake in taking up the ghost dance. They will lose by it. Many of them will be killed before it is over, and the rest will be glad to surrender and go back to the agency as prisoners of war. I am telling you the truth, Big Cloud. The ghost dance will be a failure."

Somehow, the words of the girl seemed to have a big effect on the chief.

He regarded her in silence for a minute, and then, turning on his heel, walked from the spot.

"I guess I made him do a little thinking that time, Laughing Flower," said the brave girl, turning to the young squaw.

"Yes," was the reply. "Big Cloud does not know what to do. He fears Yellow Dog; yet he hates him. The ghost dance will make trouble, I know. There will be some of the braves who will follow the chief, while others will stand by the medicine man and give him another chance. He will fail in what he has promised them, of course; but the most of them will be for letting him keep on trying. It is the way of the Indians, who have not learned the religion of the palefaces."

"Laughing Flower, you take a very intelligent view of the situation. You are a wise Apache maiden. You

should not be in this company. You must go with me when I get away from your crazy people."

"I will go with you, Arietta," was the quick reply. "I am sick of my people. They have gone mad over the ghost dance. I want to live as the palefaces do. I will go with you, Arietta."

The Apache girl certainly was showing her true worth, and Arietta felt more hopeful than ever.

It was not difficult for the girl to imagine that the medicine man would have the biggest following, in case there came a rupture in the band.

And Yellow Dog, wanting to make her his squaw, would see to it that she was not harmed.

After a while the squaws started to cooking supper for the braves.

Laughing Flower kindled a little fire near the tepee and, ignoring the two squaws, who were still doing guard duty over the white girl, proceeded to cook something for supper.

She made some corn cakes and broiled the juicy steak from a haunch of venison for her charge, and Arietta ate with a relish, washing the meal down with a copious drink of pure spring water.

Still in possession of the loaded revolver, the girl kept on hoping, for she knew that Wild had figured on meeting a division of the cavalry that had been sent out to rout the Ghost Dancers some time during the day, and if things had gone the right way they must be with him before this.

She had not told Laughing Flower of this as yet, and she now decided to do so, for she knew the girl could be fully trusted.

The eyes of the squaw brightened when she heard it.

Then a sorrowful look came over her face.

"It will be as you said to the chief," she declared. "Many of the braves will be killed, while the rest will surrender and go back to the reservation. It is too bad—this killing. I am an Apache, but I do not like it."

"There is no other way out of it, as I can see," Arietta replied, shaking her head. "The Apaches will never be conquered by kindness, that is certain. They like to see blood flow too much for that."

"That is right, Arietta," and the squaw shook her head. "The ways of the white people are the best. I hope all my people will come to that way in time."

"Well, few of the older ones will."

The sun was yet an hour high, and as Arietta glanced in the direction of Big Cloud's lodge she saw him come out, arrayed in all his finery as chief.

He went straight to the tepee of the medicine man and called to him to come out.

Yellow Dog appeared a minute or so later, and he was attired in his hideous make-up as medicine man and carried a squirming rattler in his hand.

Big Cloud stepped back when he saw the snake.

A grin spread over the ugly, painted face of the snake charmer.

The tepee was so close to the two that Arietta and her friend, the Apache maiden, could hear the words of the two.

But Arietta could not understand them very well, as the talk was in the language of the tribe.

The conversation, which was quickly translated to Arietta, was something as follows:

"Big Cloud is a great warrior. He has led his braves to many victories."

"Ugh! Yellow Dog is a great medicine man. He has made many wonderful cures."

"Big Cloud wants to live as his grandfather did before the palefaces came."

"Yes. Big Cloud wants to live that way."

"Yellow Dog will hold the ghost dance, and he will make things that way."

"Yellow Dog will make the rattlesnakes bite the paleface maiden, and then she shall die at the stake. Then the Ghost Dancers will keep on dancing till the change takes place."

The medicine man shook his head at this.

"Big Cloud will drink some firewater with Yellow Dog," he said.

"No!"

The chief had been one of those to see the live rattler pushed through the bunghole of the cask the whisky was drawn from, and he wanted none of it.

Yellow Dog walked back into his tepee, and, leaving the reptile there, came out with a bottle.

"This firewater all right," he declared. "Big Cloud will drink."

The chief wanted it badly enough, and he hesitated.

"See! The great medicine man will drink. Then Big Cloud will drink."

He poured some of the liquor into a cup and swallowed it, rubbing the region of his stomach with satisfaction immediately afterward.

Then he poured out some for the chief, who took it and drank it rather gingerly.

It evidently tasted all right, for he gave a grunt of satisfaction as he returned the cup.

The medicine man grinned and poured out some more, which he drank himself.

The chief was induced to try another, after which a brave was called and told to go into the tepee and roll out the cask of whisky.

It was a thirty-gallon cask, but was hardly full at the time, so the Indian handled it quite easily.

The fact was that the medicine man had decided that it was best to get those who were to take part in the dance under the influence of alcohol, in order to make anything like a success of it, and in order to do this he must convince them that no snakes had been put in the barrel.

The barrel set in place, he ordered the brave to beat on the rude drum he had in the tepee, and when the din started the entire population of the camp, with the exception of the guards, began to gather about the spot.

A word from Yellow Dog and the squaws and children were promptly driven away by the chief, who seemed to be more than interested in what was going on.

Then the snake-charming medicine man made a rather lengthy speech to the braves, declaring that he had acted on the advice of the Great Spirit, and had but made them believe he put the rattlesnake in the whisky.

As an evidence of this he was going to show them how he had deluded them.

"It was not me, but the Great Spirit, who made it look as though the snake went into the barrel," he added. "No Apache would drink firewater after a snake had died in it, and Yellow Dog would not, either. Now, all watch, and I will show you, for the Great Spirit has advised me to give the braves all the firewater they want before the dance begins."

He returned to the tepee and brought out a snake.

Then, at his command, the bung was taken from the cask.

He stepped up to it and forced the head of the snake into the hole.

Appearing to be forcing the reptile in, he remained there for ten or fifteen seconds, and then he threw up his hand and showed that it was gone.

A deathly silence hung over the scene while this took place.

After waiting a minute or so, the medicine man shook his sleeve and the snake dropped from it to the ground.

Big Cloud gave a grunt of satisfaction, for he understood how it had been done now.

Yellow Dog went on to tell them how he had fooled them, by the express order of the Great Spirit, and that the firewater in the cask was as clean and pure as when it was made by the white man.

There could be but one result, and that was that they were all now willing to drink it.

Fifteen minutes later the camp was in an uproar.

The whisky was getting in its work, and Arietta began to grow alarmed.

Drunken Indians are much worse than sober ones, even hostiles, and she knew that she would have a poor chance, indeed, if help did not arrive soon.

CHAPTER XIV.

YOUNG WILD WEST ON THE SCENE.

Wild allowed Hop to keep the watch he had won from the darky until after the breakfast was over.

Julius Napoleon was gloomy all this time, for there was no doubt but that he valued the timepiece highly.

Yet he had been unable to withstand the temptation to gamble.

When our hero told Hop to give him the watch the darky's eyes opened wide with pure astonishment.

He did not expect anything like this to happen, but he accepted it gladly.

"You allee samee takee my advicee, and no play dlaw pokee some more, so be," said the clever Celestial. "You no knowee um gamee, so be."

"I done guess I don' know de game, not when I play with you, Massah Hop," was the reply. "T'ank yo' fo' de watch. I won't never put her up no mo', I'se sure."

Wild, being anxious to get away and try and join the cavalry, ordered the Chinaman to get the pack horses loaded.

The darky assisted them, and it was but a few minutes before they were ready to start.

An Indian scout in the employ of the Government had

informed the authorities at the fort where the Ghost Dancers were heading for, and it was probable that it would be somewhere near that point where the cavalry would wait for them.

Young Wild West knew just enough of the proposed dance of the fanatics to make him feel certain that Arietta would be held a captive until that time, without being harmed, and he figured it that she must be rescued some time during the day.

When the little party left the ravine they proceeded parallel with the trail that ran along the river bank.

An hour later, when they reached a high elevation, they were able to see the moving column of redskins headed that way.

"Come on," said Wild. "We must find the cavalry. There are two hundred good fighting men, and they are under command of Colonel Stark. I reckon the Ghost Dancers will get more than they want before they are through with this business."

They pushed on, and about noon they came to the spot where the meeting was expected to occur.

But there were no signs of the cavalry.

After a rest and something to eat they set out again.

This time Wild took a more northerly course, which was in the direction of the fort.

He thought it possible that the cavalry had been delayed in starting out, and if that was the case they would be apt to meet them.

It was not until the middle of the afternoon that the glittering sabers and metal trappings were seen in the distance.

Then the hopes of all hands arose.

Anna and Eloise had been very quiet all the morning, for the protracted absence of Arietta was worrying them to torture almost.

But they brightened up when they saw the cavalymen coming.

"I reckon there is no use in tiring out our horses for nothing," said Wild, as he came to a halt. "We have only got to turn and go back, anyhow, and we can't gain anything by riding any further. We'll wait here for them."

"A good idea," spoke up the scout, nodding his approval.

It was not so very long before the cavalymen rode up.

It proved to be as our hero had thought. There had been three hours' delay in starting, for some reason or other, and they had hurried as fast as they could.

"I hope you will excuse me, Wild," said the colonel, who knew our hero very well, indeed, and had the utmost confidence in him. When word reached the fort that you were on the way to meet us, the general was not present. The detachment you met, having assured you that you would be joined by us, I did my level best, but it was no use until the general could be consulted. As soon as he was it was all right. We find you all O. K., too, I see."

"Well, hardly, Colonel Stark," answered Wild. "The Apache Ghost Dancers have got my sweetheart a captive."

"What!"

The colonel was much surprised to hear this.

He knew Arietta, as he did the rest of our hero's com-

panions, and when he looked around and satisfied himself that the beautiful, golden-haired girl was not with them he shook his head.

"Well, it is too bad," he declared. "Have you done nothing to rescue her?"

"It was not possible to do anything," Wild replied. "These two fellows here were in the clutches of the redskins, and while Charlie and I and one of our Chinamen were helping to get them free Arietta was caught by a party of the redskins. You see how it was. They knew there were others around then, and they were on the lookout. It would not have done for the few of us to show ourselves, or even try strategy, for the wily galoots were looking for it to happen, most likely."

"I understand. Well, this is a bad state of affairs. Tell me what you have learned, and then you may advise me."

Wild was not long in letting him know the situation, just as he understood it himself.

Then he advised that they make for the spot where the Ghost Dancers were supposed to be making for.

It happened that the scout who had brought the information to the fort was with the cavalry, and he was sent out ahead to find out if the Apaches were anywhere near the spot.

It was about five o'clock when the scout came riding back with the information that the Indians had arrived at the chosen spot.

He had seen the white girl captive, he said, and she appeared to be all right and in very good spirits.

This was encouraging to our hero and the rest, and they moved on, feeling certain that Arietta could be saved before the Ghost Dancers got in their fenzy.

It was only about ten miles to the spot, so the scout informed the colonel and, with him in the lead, so they could approach unobserved, they made rapid headway.

At length it came time for them to halt, or proceed and be seen by the Indians.

But it was Wild's idea to try and save Arietta by strategy before the rout took place.

That there would be little fear of the Ghost Dancers getting away was sure, for there were fully two hundred fighting cavalymen, who had been in many Indian skirmishes, and who knew their business well.

"Now, boys," said Wild, when he was ready to leave with Charlie and Jim, "we will try and sneak up to the camp; and if we can do that we will be all right. Colonel Stark, you will wait until fifteen minutes after our departure, and then you can come on. It is getting toward sunset now, and, according to what the snake-charming medicine man told Mr. Greenwood, that is the time when the dance is to begin."

"I'll do just as you say, Wild," was the assurance of the colonel.

Wild knew that they would, and he also knew that their help might be needed in a critical time.

The three had barely set out on foot when Hop came running along after them.

"Me wantee go, too, so be, Misler Wild," he said, pleadingly.

"Come on, then. I reckon you're all right, Hop," was the reply. "If you can do as well as you did last night you're a dandy."

"Me allee samee velly muchee dandy, so be, Misler Wild," was the reply. "Me gottee allee same fireworks for um ledskins."

"Well, I'll tell you whether to use them or not when we get there; so don't get overanxious and make a fizzle of it. Arietta must be got away from the Ghost Dancers as soon as possible."

Jim Dart was happy to be along with them, for he knew that his sweetheart and the scout's wife were perfectly safe.

The four made their way up the long hill, keeping under the cover of the rocks and shrubbery.

They were not long in sighting one of the redskin pickets, and they could hear the sounds belonging to such a camp.

It was just then that the redskins started to drink the firewater, and when they began to hoot and yell the guard turned his attention to them, giving our friends a chance to slip past him and enter a thicket.

At first Wild could not understand what the yelling meant, and he thought it might be that the ghost dance was about to begin.

But when he got a little nearer and saw the barrel he knew what was up.

"The fiend of a medicine man is going to get them drunk before they start in," he whispered.

"That's right," answered Charlie. "That'll make it all the worse, I reckon. But we'll git Arietta, all right; see if we don't!"

They crept up closer, for they saw that the medicine man was making preparations for something.

"I reckon the dance is about to begin," said Jim. "Ah! the chief and the medicine man are in a redhot argument about something."

This was indeed the truth.

They could see Arietta stand by the tepee, an Indian girl at her side, and finally, when both the chief and the medicine man started for her, they knew that the critical moment was at hand.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RESCUE OF ARIETTA.

The sun was sinking in the west when the argument reopened between Yellow Dog and Big Cloud.

The braves were drinking the whisky from the barrel as fast as they could get at it, and the confusion was great.

By giving the chief firewater the medicine man had only made matters worse, for his superstitious fears were lessened when under the influence of alcohol.

"The paleface maiden must be sacrificed," was the edict of the chief, and the braves took up the cry, for there were very few of them who knew that Yellow Dog had selected her for his squaw.

But the medicine man was obdurate, and finally he turned to the chief and said:

"Come with me. If the paleface maiden will be my squaw then she shall live, and the snakes shall be turned

upon her. But the Great Spirit will not let them bite her, for he has chosen her as the only paleface who shall live in the country of the redmen. If she refuses to be my squaw then the snakes shall be turned upon her, and she will be bitten by them. We will try and see which it is to be."

The two made their way to Arietta, who was standing in front of the tepee, Laughing Flower at her side.

"Yellow Dog has come for his answer, paleface squaw," said the scheming villain. "See, the sun is down!"

"All right," answered Arietta, coolly. "I will become your wife, but not until after the ghost dance is over."

The medicine man flashed a glance of triumph at the chief, who frowned darkly.

But his face quickly lighted.

"The rattlesnakes!" he exclaimed. "Fetch them. If they do not bite her I will know that the Great Spirit means that she shall live."

Then, with his own hands, Big Cloud seized Arietta and pinned her hands to her sides before she knew what had happened.

He led her to where a sapling had been broken off two or three feet from the ground, and, calling for a rope, tied her wrists together tightly and made her fast to the stake.

"Start the ghost dance," he cried, turning to the medicine man. "Bring out the rattlesnakes!"

An order from Yellow Dog quickly brought the box containing his pets.

A log lay near the stake to which Arietta was tied, and she uttered a cry of horror when she saw the glistening reptiles dumped out of the box behind it.

"Start up the music!" yelled Yellow Dog. "The Great Spirit is hovering over our heads. The ghost dance must begin. Hurry, or you will all be too late!"

Pom-pom! Pom-pom!

The drum began its doleful tune and the medicine man began dancing like mad.

In less than ten seconds fully fifty believers in the new creed joined in, and then it was that the scene became hideous.

Arietta uttered a shriek as she saw the heads of the rattlesnakes showing above the log, and she vainly tried to break away from the stake.

Laughing Flower suddenly came running toward her, a knife in her hand, to cut her loose.

But she was quickly caught by one of the braves, and then, at the order of the chief, she was tied hand and foot and placed in her tepee.

Meanwhile our friends close by had been cut off from a view of what was taking place, as the stake was on the other side of a row of tepees.

They knew nothing about the snakes, for in the din they could not understand a word that was said.

But when the drum started up Wild knew that the dance was beginning, and as the cavalymen must be close by now he decided to run around and try to save his sweetheart.

Just what was happening to her at that moment he did not know, but the fact that the chief had grabbed her and led her out of sight was sufficient to make him believe that something was wrong.

He moved slowly, for he did not want to be caught by the redskins before he got a chance to lend aid to the girl.

The Ghost Dancers were getting into a frenzy now, and a moment or so later, when the young deadshot rounded a tepee, he almost doubted the accuracy of his own eyes.

Young Wild West uttered an involuntary cry of horror as he saw Arietta tied to a stake, the hideous snake charmer dancing near her and calling a score of slimy reptiles to her.

The deafening din made by the Ghost Dancers added to the horror of the scene.

But his wonderful coolness and nerve stood our hero in great stead just then.

He did not fire a shot, nor did he call to his partners.

Holding his revolver in his left hand, he whipped out his hunting knife with the right and darted for the spot.

The Apache fanatics were joining in the dance as fast as they reached the spot now, but Wild did not stop.

He ran forward, knocking them down as he did so.

By this time the snakes were all around the frightened girl, and when he saw that none of them was paying the least attention to her, but were simply creeping toward the snake charmer, Wild's heart gave a bound.

Two more leaps and he was at the log the reptiles had crawled over.

Swish!

One hard blow from his knife and the rope was severed.

Then, catching the fainting girl in his arms, he bounded away like a shot.

Few of the Ghost Dancers saw what had happened, so engrossed were they in their Satanic dance.

The medicine man dared not leave his snakes just then, so the boy ran on until he came in sudden contact with one of the guards.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the redskin.

Thud!

The boy's knife struck the fellow, and down he went.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

At the very moment Young Wild West struck down the Indian who had barred his way to liberty the cavalymen came up the hill and were discovered by the guards.

The yell of alarm that went up from the excited guards was not heard, for the din was terrific now.

Those who had started dancing meant to keep it up until they dropped from sheer exhaustion, for such a course had been specified by the medicine man.

But when the guards began firing at the advancing cavalymen that changed things.

Some of the dancers ceased right away, the others keeping on, unheeding of the danger that threatened them.

Into the camp rushed the cavalymen, on foot, for they had left their horses below the hill.

"Hooray! Whoopee!" yelled Cheyenne Charlie, as he joined in the rush. "Here we come, Wild. Whoopee!"

Then some of the cavalymen lost their heads and bullets began to fly like hail.

Wild got Arietta behind a big rock, where the bullets

could not reach them, and then he had the satisfaction of seeing her open her eyes.

"Oh, Wild!" she exclaimed. "You came just in time! It was too much for me to stand, and just as I felt you grab hold of me I fainted. I couldn't help it, Wild!"

"I don't blame you a bit, little one," replied the dashing young hero of the Wild West, as he kissed her tenderly on the brow. "It was surely a terrible fix to be placed in. My! But I don't know when I was more excited, Et."

"You could not have been too much excited, or you would never have done what you did, Wild. You must have taken great chances, and used the best of judgment."

"Well, I reckon I did, Et. But, come on! I want to join in the rout."

"Oh, Wild, the Apache girl! She must be saved. She is a noble girl, even if she is a squaw. I promised that she should go with me."

"Where is she?"

"In that tepee over there. The one with the red ribbon tied to the pole. You can see it."

"I see it. Here! You come over here."

He led her to a sequestered spot, and just as they got there who should greet them smilingly but Hop.

"Me velly glad, Missy Alietta," the Chinaman exclaimed, joyfully. "You havee velly muchee hardee time, so be."

Shots could be heard on every hand now, and, leaving the girl in charge of the Chinaman, Wild darted for the tepee she had pointed out to him.

He saw that the shooting was all being done outside the camp, as the Ghost Dancers had been put to flight.

Jim Dart and one of the cavalymen saw what he was aiming for, and they at once ran toward him.

"Get the squaw out of there, Jim, and take her to Arietta," our hero said.

"All right," answered Jim, not asking why.

Then Wild darted into the thick of the fight, if fight it could be called, for it really was nothing more than a rout.

The boy ran on through the smoke, and, emerging from it, he suddenly saw two of the Indians running toward the lodge of the chief.

One was the chief himself and the other the medicine man.

Wild saw them reach the lodge and dart inside, and then he knew they must be trying to hide until an opportunity afforded for them to escape.

But he was wrong in this conclusion, for the two leaders of the band of Ghost Dancers had agreed to go there and fight.

Each blamed the other for what had happened, and there was but one way to settle it.

By the time Wild got to the lodge the shooting was done with, and the cavalymen were rounding up those who had surrendered.

He peered in through the opening at the entrance and saw the two villains facing each other.

They had drawn their knives, and he knew right away what was up then.

"Ugh!" said the chief. "Yellow Dog is a humbug. The Great Spirit does not want the ghost dance to take place."

This was said in his own tongue, but our hero knew enough of it to catch the meaning.

"Big Cloud's tongue is crooked," flashed back the medicine man, who was anything but a coward.

Then the knives met in the air, with a clash.

Wild took a quick aim and fired.

Crack!

As the report rang out the pair of the belligerents dropped their weapons.

The bullet had hit the blade of one, and as it was touching the other at the time, they each had received a slight shock in addition to that given them by the crack of the revolver.

"Hold up your hands, you sneaking curs!" exclaimed our hero, in a ringing voice. "I reckon this about winds up the Ghost Dancers. You are prisoners, the pair of you!"

"Ugh! Young Wild West!" exclaimed the chief.

"Yes, that's right, you old villain! Now, just step outside or I'll drop you in your tracks!"

Big Clouds did not want to die as suddenly as all that, so he came out.

Yellow Dog followed him, looking grotesque and ridiculous in his make-up.

A couple of cavalymen came running up when they saw them come out, and the next minute they were being bound.

There is not much more to add to this story.

Suffice it to say that only a few Indians got away from the camp, and they were captured the next day, and were glad to surrender.

The snakes of the medicine man were not all killed, but those that got away could do no harm, anyhow, as their poisonous fangs had been removed by the sharp, old villain.

The next day after the rout all hands started for the fort, the Yankee peddler being in possession of his mules and wagon again, but without his stock in trade, which was a dead loss to him, for the squaws had broken what they had rather than give up the booty.

Our friends had surely put in a lively time with the Ghost Dancers, but Arietta's experience with the snake charmer was something that was bound to make a lasting impression on her mind.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST CROSSING THE DEAD LINE; or, 'THE FEUD OF THE COWBOYS AND THE SHEEP HERDERS,'" which will be the next number (300) of "Wild West Weekly."

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SOME GOOD ARTICLES.

In the Chinatown of every city the grocers sell toothpicks made of walrus whiskers. These are excellent toothpicks, and in China a fashionable dinner is complete without a bundle of them. From every side of the mouth of the walrus whiskers, at once stiff and pliable, project. They are about four inches long, and the older the walrus the stiffer and more elastic are these hairs and the better toothpicks they make. When the Alaskans kill a walrus they pluck out the whiskers carefully with tweezers, and, bundling them up in neat packets, they ship them, when there are enough, to China.

Are you right or left handed? Only about one boy in seven is born left-handed, and in Austria, Russia, and other countries, there are laws compelling parents to keep at it until they have changed left-handed children to right-handed ones. This can be easily done up to the age of twelve. All tools are made for right-handed persons. They are also better drivers and walkers. Only about one man in fifty can use both arms alike, but that is no great advantage, unless using a shovel or ax.

In six years of war, and in fourteen battles, Napoleon had 32,456 drummer boys killed and several thousand wounded. Those who fought him always sought to kill off the drummers first, so that the soldiers should not have the beating of the drums to encourage them. The world would not allow helpless boys to be slaughtered thus in this day and age. Few armies have them now, anyway, as their places have been taken by buglers. Napoleon's lost drummers were an army by themselves.

German army officers have recently experimented, with satisfactory results, with a new form of rifle ball invented by an Italian, Signor Cei-Rigotti. The projectile terminates at its front end in a screw-shaped projection, the purpose of which is to impart a more continuous revolution to the projectile during its flight. The effect is said to be to give a much longer range and a flatter trajectory with the same original velocity as that of projectiles of the usual form. For some reason, the invention was not accepted in Italy, but it is said that this fact is regretted by the Italian authorities since the successful experiments in Germany.

The postal authorities of the United States, as well as those of Great Britain, for a great many years experienced great difficulty with the word "only" on postal cards. The efforts to avoid clumsiness and ambiguity taxed the ingenuity of the post office people to the utmost. The Post Office Department made six attempts to find a brief, elegant and unambiguous legend for the card. An early postal card was inscribed: "Nothing but the address can be placed on this side," which was neither true nor elegant. "Nothing but the address to be on this side," was more to the point, but as it looked bad to the

authorities, they next evolved this legend: "Write only the address on this side." This was objected to on the ground that it barred the use of a typewriting machine. "Write the address only on this side, the message on the other," came next, and was promptly criticized as being both clumsy and ambiguous. Then the word "only" was dropped, but without much improvement. Finally Uncle Sam's officials gave up the struggle to be original. The card then adopted, and now in use, bears this inscription: "The space below is for the address only."

The latest discoveries of valuable qualities in a formerly neglected species of tree resulted after an investigation of the tupelo gum, which finds its home in the Southern swamps. Tupelo, two years ago, was little known, and seldom used, even in the parts of the country where it is most plentiful. In the cutting of cypress in the Gulf States, where tupelo is found in large quantities, the trees were disregarded. It was found that the prejudice then existing against the wood was caused by a lack of knowledge of its properties and lack of care in handling the material. The investigations carried on by the United States Forest Service have proved the value of the wood for a number of uses. The result of these studies largely removed the prejudices against this gum, and in a short time the demand for tupelo rapidly increased. The wood is now widely used, not only in the States where it grows, but also in distant parts of the country, in the manufacture of wooden pumps, sounding-boards for violins and organs, mantels, and interior finishing, such as molding, door and window frames and door jambs. It is also manufactured into all kinds of lumber, including a good grade of edge-grain flooring. Tupelo gum, in the form of flooring, was recently found competing successfully with Douglas fir in the Los Angeles market, even though bearing a freight rate of 85 cents a hundred-weight from its source of production in Louisiana.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES.

"You look like Aphrodite to-day, Miss Blank." "Then was she really as beautiful as they say?"

"Madam, beware of a man with black eyes." "Huh! He ain't dangerous. That's my husband. I gave him them eyes last night."

"You seem blue, old man." "Yes. I'm out of work, and don't know what to do." "Why not start an employment agency?"

Molly—How are you going to reform him? Dolly—Marry him. Molly—Goodness! Does he need such heroic treatment as that?"

He—It is reported around that you and I are engaged. She—Didn't you deny it? He—No. I was afraid to do so without first seeing you.

She—I like a brilliant man. He—Well, I could make bright remarks if you'd lead up to 'em, like wives do in the newspaper witticisms.

"Women," growled the fussy old bachelor, "remind me of eggs." "Must be handled with care—is that the answer?" queried the young man. "No," rejoined the f. o. b. "One can never tell their age by their looks."

"You need not hesitate about smoking that cigar. It is my favorite brand." "Smoke them yourself?" "All the time." The man looked at it suspiciously, lighted the torch, and took a few puffs. "How do you like it?" "Well," he replied, guardedly, "I was just wondering." "Wondering what?" "If you have to get a permit from the health officer to smoke them."

A LAWYER'S ADVENTURE

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

Many years ago I was practicing law.

I was called on one day by a pretty woman, who told me her husband had been arrested for horse-stealing.

She wished to retain me for the defense.

She said that her husband was suspected of belonging to an extensive band of horse-thieves.

I asked her to tell me the whole truth of the matter, and if it were true that her husband did belong to such a band.

"Ah, sir," said she, "a better man at heart than my George never lived; but he liked cards and drink, and I am afraid they made him do what he never would have done if he had not drunk. I fear that it can be proved that he had the horse; he didn't steal it; another did, and passed it to him."

I didn't like the case.

She seemed to observe my intention to refuse the case, and burst into tears.

I never could see a woman weep without feeling like a weak fool myself.

If it hadn't been for eyes brightened by pearly tears, I'd never been caught in the lasso of matrimony.

And my would-be client was pretty.

The handkerchief that hid her streaming eyes didn't hide her ripe lips, and her bosom rose and fell like a gull in a gale of wind at sea.

I took the case, and she gave me the particulars.

The gang, of which he was not a member, had persuaded him to take the horse.

He knew the horse was stolen, and acknowledged it when he was arrested.

Worse still—he had trimmed the horse's tail and mane to alter his appearance, and the opposition could prove it.

The trial came on.

I worked hard to get a jury of ignorant men, who had more heart than brain—who, if they could not fathom the depths of argument, or follow the labyrinthine mazes of the law, could feel for a young fellow in a bad fix, a weeping, pretty wife, nearly broken-hearted, and quite distracted.

Knowing the use of "effect," I told her to dress in deep mourning, and bring her little cherub of a boy, only three years old, into court, and to sit as near her husband as the officer would let her.

The prosecution opened very bitterly; inveighed against thieves, who had made the land a terror to strangers and travelers, and who had robbed every farmer in the region of their finest horses.

It introduced witnesses, and proved all, and more than I feared it would.

The time came for me to rise for defense.

Witnesses—I had none. But I determined to make an effort—only hoping so to interest the judge and jury as to secure a recommendation to clemency and a light sentence.

So I painted this picture.

A young man entered into life wedded to an angel; beautiful in person, possessing every gentle and noble attribute. Temptation was before and all around him.

He kept a tavern.

Guests there were many; it was not for him to inquire into their business.

They were well dressed, made large bills, and paid promptly.

At an unguarded hour, when he was insane with the liquor they urged upon him, he had deviated from the path of rectitude.

The demon of alcohol reigned in his brain, and it was his first offense.

Mercy pleaded for another chance to save him from ruin.

Justice did not require that his young wife should go down sorrowing to the grave, and that the shadow of disgrace and the taunt of a felon father should cross the path of that sweet child.

Oh, how earnestly did I plead for them!

The woman wept—the husband did the same.

The judge fidgeted and rubbed his eyes; the jury looked melting. If I could have had the closing speech he would have been cleared; but the prosecution had the close, and threw ice on the fire I had kindled.

But they did not quite put it out.

The judge charged according to law and evidence, but evidently leaned on the side of mercy.

The jury found a verdict of guilty, but unanimously recommended the prisoner to the mercy of the court.

My client was sentenced to the shortest imprisonment the court was empowered to give, and both jury and court signed a petition for an unconditional pardon, which was afterward granted, but not before the following incident occurred:

Some three months after this, I received an account for collection from a wholesale house.

The parties to collect from were hard ones, but they had property, which they were about to assign before they broke, under attachment.

Finding I was neck ahead and bound to win, they caved in, and parted three thousand seven hundred and ninety-four dollars in good money.

I received the funds just after bank opening, but other business detained me till after dinner.

I then started for a neighboring town.

I had gone two miles, when I noticed a splendid pair of horses attached to a light drag, in which were seated four men, evidently of the high-strung order.

They swept by, as if to show how easily they could do it.

They shortened in, and allowed me to come up with them, and hailing me, asked me to diminish the contents of a flask of whisky they had, but I excused myself with the plea that I had plenty.

They asked me how far I was going.

I told them as far as Vernon, if my horse didn't tire out.

They mentioned a pleasant tavern a few miles ahead as a nice stopping-place, and then drove on.

I did not like the looks of those fellows nor their actions; but I was bound to go ahead.

I had a brace of revolvers and a knife; my money was in a belt around my body.

I drove slowly, in hopes that they would go on, and I should see them no more.

It was nearly dusk when I saw a tavern-sign ahead.

At the same time I saw their drag standing before the door.

I would have passed on, but my horse needed rest.

I pulled up, and a woman came to the door.

She turned as pale as a sheet when she saw me. She did not speak, but, with a meaning look, she put her finger on her lips and beckoned me in.

She was the wife of my late client.

When I entered, the party recognized me and hailed me as old traveling friend, and asked me to drink.

I respectfully but firmly declined to do so.

"By heaven, you shall drink or fight!" said the noisiest of the party.

"Just as you please—drink I shall not!" said I, purposely showing the butt of a revolver which kicks six times in rapid succession.

The party interposed, and very easily quelled the assailant.

One offered me a cigar, which I reluctantly refused, but a glance from the woman induced me to accept it.

She advanced and proffered me a light, and in doing so slipped a note into my hand, which she must have written with a pencil the moment before.

Never shall I forget the words. They were:

"Beware! they are members of the gang. They mean to rob and murder you! Leave soon; I will detain them."

I did not feel comfortable just then, but tried to do so.

"Have you any room to put up my horse?" I asked, turning to the woman.

"What, are you not going on to-night?" asked one of the men. "We are."

"No," said I. "I shall stay here to-night."

"We'll all stay, then, I guess, and make a night of it," said another.

"You'll have to put up your own horse; here's a lantern," said the woman.

"I am used to that," I said. "Gentlemen, excuse me a minute; I'll join you in a drink when I come in."

"Good! More whisky, old woman!" shouted they.

I went out and glanced at their drag; it was old-fashioned, and "linch-pins" secured the wheels.

To take out my knife and extract one from the fore and hind wheels was but the work of an instant, and I threw them as far off in the darkness as I could.

To untie my horse and dash off was the work of a moment.

The road lay down a steep hill.

I had hardly got under full headway, when I heard a yell from the party I had so unceremoniously left.

I put whip to my horse.

The next moment, with a shout, they started.

I left my horse to pick his way.

A moment later I heard a crash—a horrible shriek.

The wheels were off.

Then came the rush of the horses tearing along with the wreck of the drag.

Finally they seemed to fetch up in a wood.

One or two shrieks I heard as I swept on, leaving them far behind.

For some time I hurried my horse, and it was a little after midnight when I got to Vernon.

The next day I heard that a pair of horses had run away, and that two men out of four had been so badly hurt that their lives were despaired of; but I didn't cry. My clients got their money, but I didn't travel that road any more.

A BABOON'S BIOGRAPHY

Many years ago, when stationed at an outpost on the Great Fish river, in the eastern frontier of South Africa, I was presented by the officer I relieved with a young baboon, which, when captured, was so young that it had to be brought up by hand. From the first I took a great deal of notice of it, and it became very much attached to me. It made great progress, and grew up a healthy, strong animal.

Jacko's pole was always erected close to my quarters, and I could watch his proceedings from my window unknown to him, and they were always most amusing. It was the custom in barracks for the pioneers to go round and sweep up the barrack square. One morning I saw a man, with a wheelbarrow full of straw and other rubbish, sweepings of the square, put down his barrow near Jacko's pole while he was sweeping in the immediate neighborhood. Jacko was seated upon his high porch, apparently taking no notice of what was going on. Presently I saw the pioneer disappear to sweep round a corner. Jacko was down like lightning, capsized the barrow, and with his long

and powerful arms scattered the contents in every direction, and when the pioneer appeared, was up on his perch again with wonderful celerity, looking in quite a different direction, with a face of the most ludicrous innocence.

It was perfectly useless to provide him with any place of refuge or shelter, as his energies were at once at work to destroy it, in which he succeeded uncommonly well; so at night a sack was suspended from the top of his pole, into which he nestled himself with great comfort; and it is a singular fact, that at night I could go up to his pole and touch his sack, and he never attempted to move, but would give me an affectionate grunt of glad welcome, but if any other individual approached within a yard of his pole Jacko was out of his nest in an instant, screaming and preparing for battle.

On a cold, wet, rainy night I used often to take him a bowl full of hot coffee, and knowing there was sugar at the bottom of the bowl, he could not resist the temptation of plunging his hand into it to search for the sugar, although the coffee was so hot that he was obliged to cry out with the pain.

* Had I not witnessed what I am about to relate, I could not have believed it. I have stood within thirty yards of his pole with my bow and arrow, and taking deliberate aim, have launched an arrow at him. Jacko would invariably catch the arrow in his hand, holding it until I went and claimed it, when he always gave it up readily. But it is most remarkable that if any other person took the bow and fired at him, Jacko, on catching the arrow, always broke it in pieces. I need not say that on these occasions I invariably gave my worst arrows to my friends.

He was fond of his grog, weak wine and water, which was given to him occasionally in a bottle, tightly corked, and it was one of the pet amusements to see him pick out the cork, bit by bit, with his very strong nail; but to show how perfectly well he understood the use of the cork, when he had picked away as much as he could reach with his fingers, and still found himself unable to get at the contents, he would take up the bottle and crack the neck off against his pole.

To give one instance of Jacko's deep cunning: My company was on the line of march to an outpost. My wife and I were riding a few hundred yards in rear of the men, Jacko, as usual, loose and following us like a dog. We observed a Fingoe sitting on an ant heap, about thirty yards from the roadside, with his wife standing within a few feet of him, holding in her hand a fine cob of Indian corn. All at once we saw Jacko walk up to the Fingoe and make friends with him, a most unusual thing, as he never took to the natives, and even sitting on the Fingoe's knee. Then we saw him make a spring, and in the jump seize the Indian corn, and running for his life, he caught hold of my stirrup and was on the pommel of my saddle like lightning. The Fingoe was much enraged, and threw his "knobkerie" at him, so I pacified the man, much to his delight, by giving him a bit of tobacco.

I have already said that the soldiers were very fond of Jacko, and in the evening especially they would surround his pole, playing with him; but if he suddenly caught sight of me coming into the barrack square, he would immediately go round the circle, biting every one of the men, dash up on his perch, and scream frantically, as if trying to persuade me that he was the injured party appealing to my protection.

Although brought up by hand, his intuitive perception of danger and recognition of his enemies were remarkable. If I wished to keep him up on his pole, I had only to coil a dead snake at the bottom of it, and no dainty would induce him to come down; and when I was absent from my post, and the alarm cry of "Jacko is loose" sounded, my wife had only to put a leopard's skin, with the head stuffed, in the doorway, and the quarters were perfectly safe from Master Jacko's intrusion.

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